

Vigo Co. Recreation  
T.H. Trib. 1/15/68

# County Park Plan Takes In Area's Rich History

(SECOND OF A SERIES)

By DICK SUTLIFF

Tribune Staff Writer

In preparing the master plan for parks and recreation in Vigo County, consideration was given to the history of the area as well as its natural topographic features.

Along with these factors—resources, watersheds, climate and transportation all had a bearing on establishing the need for recreation facilities on a county-wide basis.

Four national flags have flown over Vigo County. There would have been five, except that the Indians—first inhabitants of this land—had no flag as we think of them today.

The first flag to fly over these parts was brought from Spain by the adventurer, Hernando DeSoto, when he landed on the sunny shores of Florida about 1540.

He did not get as far north as Vigo County, but took possession of all the land drained by the Mississippi River and its tributaries, this in the name of the King of Spain.

Then came the French traders and explorers. At the beginning of the 18th century, these men carried on trade with the Indians and tried to take possession of the land for the King of France.

## Flag of France

They raised the French flag over an area they called Terre Haute. The word "Terre Haute" is derived from the French "terre" (land) and "haute" (high) and signifies high land. The traders gave the community its name, not so much because of its elevation (498 feet above sea level), as from the fact that this is the only high ground approaching the Wabash River for several miles.

With the capture of Quebec in 1759, all French possessions in this part of North America passed into the hands and under the flag of England.

During the American Revolution, Gen. George Rogers Clark and his men won the battle of Fort Sackville at Vincennes; its fall assured the United States of this section of the country.

The advance northward from Vincennes through the wilderness began Sept. 28, 1811. The troops arrived Oct. 2 at a point on the Wabash 65 miles from Vincennes and a short distance above the present site of Terre Haute.

Here on a beautiful parcel of high ground on the east bank of the river, Gen. William Henry Harrison erected what was christened Fort Harrison.

Francis Vigo, the Spanish merchant, is forever identified with the history of the Northwest Territory, and particularly that part pertaining to the country lying above the Wabash.

He financed the campaign of Gen. Clark and made possible the expedition that acquired the Northwest Territory for the U.S. On Jan. 21, 1818, the state Legislature approved an act creating the county which bears Col. Vigo's name.

## Held By Miami Indians

When the white man first explored the vast territory now occupied by Indiana, and in particular Vigo County, the Miami tribe was in possession of this land. They were a confederate nation made up of the Twightwees, the Weas, the Piankeshaws and the Shockneys.

They loved their native forests, worshipped freedom and hated all restraint.

The City of Terre Haute occupies the site of a former Wea village. The Indian name of the village was Ouateno and is said to have meant rising sun. When Indiana became a state in 1816, many Indian hunters were still roaming over Vigo County.

Later, the Wabash River and Vigo County became the focal point of commerce and travel in this section of the state. Terre Haute was a rough, tough, brawling frontier town.

The rivers became channels of trade, and stimulated business to flourishing success. The river trade built the foundation of growth that was cemented by the National Road, now called U. S. Highway 40.

## First Steamer

The first steamer reached Terre Haute in 1822, and by 1838, as many as 800 steamers had come from New Orleans, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. But, U. S. 40 proved the gateway to the west, and paved the way for the settlement of Illinois.

The first newspaper in Terre Haute made its appearance on the streets in 1823. This was soon followed by the coming of the Wabash and Erie Canal and the railroads; later, came the telegraph and the telephone.

The area was moving forward rapidly, and there was plenty of work to be done.

Then as now, fertile farm land comprised the basic land resource in the county. The soil varies from clay type in the

upland areas to sandy loam along the Wabash. Many bayous and sloughs also are found in the Wabash flood plain.

The terrain of Vigo County is flat to hilly, with irregular topography in the strip pit areas where lakes and hills have been created.

## Coal Abundant

Coal, oil, timber and gravel are among the other resources utilized commercially in varying degrees. Abundant quantities of coal and the Wabash River combine to make this region a significant producer of electricity.

There are five large watersheds in the county—Prairie Creek, Honey Creek, Lost Creek, Otter Creek and Sugar Creek. Small portions of Busseron, Turman and other streams are also included.

It's often said of Indiana weather: If you don't like it at the moment, stick around a few minutes and it'll change.

But in spite of almost daily changes in weather here, the county has a moderate climate, permitting outdoor recreation of varying kinds all year long.

The average rainfall is 39.58 inches and the average temperature 54.3 degrees.

Transportation facilities are termed in the master plan as adequate to meet the current demand. Vigo County is served by three U. S. highways, five state roads and the latest addi-

tion, Interstate Route 70.

## Tourist Travel

I-70 will contribute greatly to the tourist travel potential currently being developed by the state Department of Tourism under the guidance of Lt. Gov. Robert L. Rock.

The Pennsylvania, New York Central, Milwaukee and the Chicago & Eastern Illinois railroads serve the county. At the moment, at least, only the Milwaukee does not provide passenger service.

Many folks are not aware of the fact that Vigo County has the longest commercial runway—10,500 feet—in the state. Hulman Field is serviced by a modern air terminal that provides the necessary facilities for commercial and private travel. The Sky King Airport, north of the city, accommodates private planes.

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers is considering the feasibility of revitalizing and channeling the Wabash. If carried through, this project would mean the re-birth of barge travel, and the county could become a major trade area through the transporting of heavy manufactured goods and raw materials which would attract heavy industry to this area.

**TOMORROW:** Existing recreation areas and facilities.



# Summer is parks

Community Affairs File

Complete listing of parks and park facilities in greater Terre Haute area.

By Carl Roger Orth

It's 4:59 Friday afternoon in the city on an irresistible summer day. So who can work? A single thought pulses through the mind of every adult -- gotta getaway, gotta getaway, gotta getaway. The factory worker, the housewife, the office desk jockey all pace about like a caged tiger.

Bingo! It's five o'clock at long last. You're going to pack up the kids and cruise on down the highway, right? Wrong. Check the gas gauge. Almost empty. And how about the wallet? Totally empty. Planning an extended trip around the block, hey? The gas shortage may be a hoax, but prices at the pump are no illusion.

Don't despair, Gloomy Gus. You can still join the weekend exodus out of the city into the great outdoors. Your friendly, neighborhood city and county park department officials remind you that your tax dollars have paid for some of the best in recreation right here at home. Never have so few dollars done so much for so many. Most services are free.

With a little imagination and appreciation of nature, you can get away as far as you want in your mind without traveling much farther than your own backyard. Play with the kids at Deming, commune with nature at Dobbs, camp at Fowler, do your homework at New Goshen turn-of-the-century schoolhouse or isolate yourself in the solitude of Prairie Creek Park. If all else fails, try talking to your mate.

Communicating and enjoying your ever-lovin' spouse is what he/she is there for, after all.

A smart fellow we know says leisure time is not a luxury these days; it is a necessity. You gotta get away from the daily grind or else you go bananas. But you don't have to go far -- just go. So what are you waiting for? Hit the road, Jack. Read the rest of this article as you head for some fun in the sun.

## REA PARK

The new Chalos city administration has concentrated on improving city parks. In particular Rea Park clubhouse received a badly needed facelift.

Golf pro Ray Goddard was hired to direct the revitalization of Rea Park. Goddard brought his many years of experience as Elks Lodge golf pro to do the job. Already revenue doubled in the months of March and April when compared to 1979 figures for the same period.

The clubhouse had become run down from lack of maintenance. Tennis and golf players often preferred to go to the gas station restroom rather than brave the unsanitary bathrooms at Rea Park. The bathroom was cleaned up.

Also, the main hall was reopened after a thorough scrubbing. A snack bar was refurbished to attract more customers.

A ramshackle old shed which housed

golf carts was torn down, erasing an eyesore from the nearby tennis courts.

The pro shop received some attention with a coat of paint.

Goddard also brought his fleet of 18 privately-owned golf carts to enhance Rea Park facilities. A basement room was remodeled to store the carts. A ramp for the carts was built from the basement to the ground floor.

Best of all, these tasks were accomplished relatively inexpensively by using city park department work crews with some union supervision. It represents the rededication toward maintaining not only Rea Park, but all 20 city parks under the direction of park superintendent Patrick Ralston.

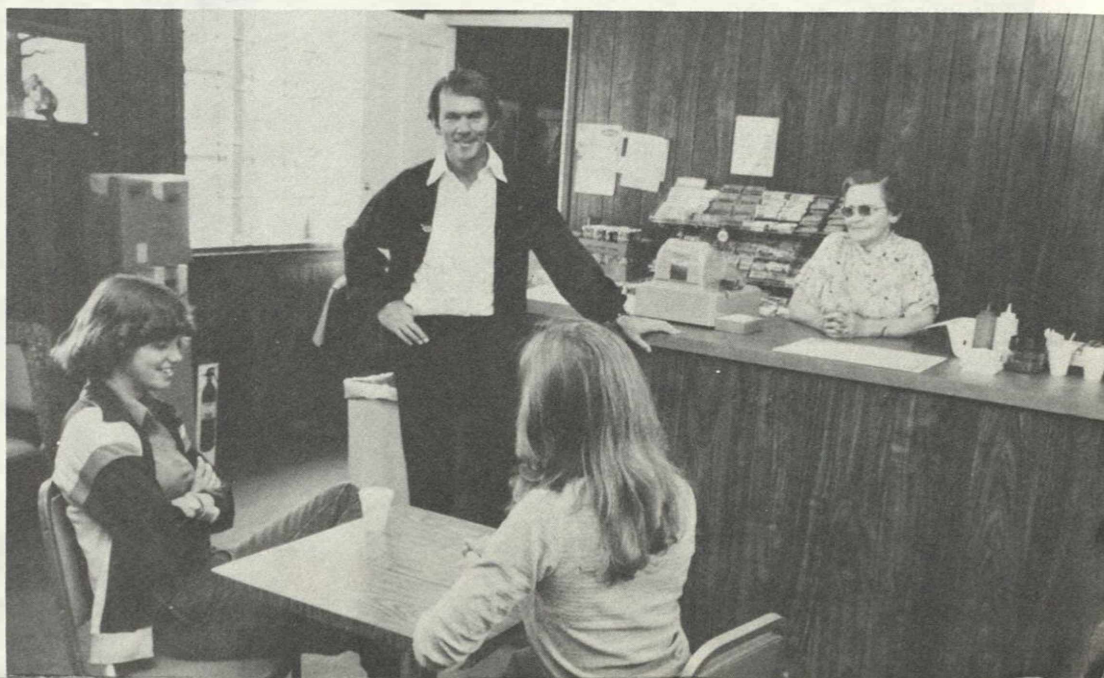
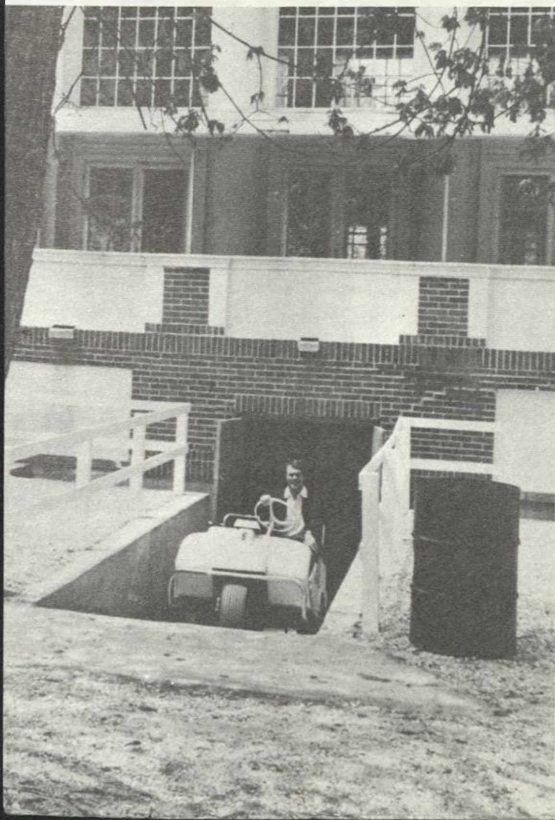
## PRAIRIE CREEK

Where Miami Indians once trod, visitors can commune with nature on the 100-acre Prairie Creek Park which has changed little in appearance for more than a century.

The park lies about 15 to 20 miles south of Terre Haute on a road accessible from either State Road 63 or U.S. 41. The sparsely-populated farm area isolates the park just enough to create an extraordinary sense of wilderness. The solitude of watching the sunrise transcends into something of an almost religious experience, as it must have been for the Indians who worshipped the

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land, water and sky. And here, the birds outnumber people. The birds sing without competing against honking car horns or thundering motorcycles. The birds can make quite a racket, though. City folk soon discard notions that the countryside is quiet.

Of course, some things have changed since pioneer days. Indians could not plug their teepee into one of 42 electrical outlets for campers (electricity costs \$3 a night). Campers, those teepees on wheels, had not been invented when Indians walked this ground. And Indians took a dip in the lake instead of showering in the several "comfort stations" in the park.

Still, descendants of settlers can rediscover a sense of adventure on the nature trails which weave through heavily wooded areas. The three miles of trails are a jogger's delight. For the really rugged souls the park department eventually will develop an isolated camping area accessible only by back-packing on foot. The less industrious individuals among us can lean back and do battle with catfish and bass in the 18-acre lake nestled among trees.

For sports buffs, the park provides a court for tennis matches or a fast-moving basketball game. Water floods the court in winter to form an ice skating rink. A large baseball diamond and practice field can challenge even the most hard-hitting home run sluggers. After so much exhausting activity, park visitors can munch on lunch at picnic shelters. The shelters can be reserved free for up to 100 people.

The pioneer spirit really comes alive when visitors view a 125-year-old log cabin originally built in Vermillion County. Park department workers dug a basement into one of the park's many hills, and then reconstructed the cabin to house a maple syrup furnace and boiler. For the past two years park crews actually have produced more than 60 gallons of pure maple syrup. The cabin is a time machine. As soon as the creaky wooden door is bolted behind you, the calendar is turned back 100 years.

## DEMING PARK

The oldest city park has long been a favorite of weekend sojourners. Quacking ducks greet visitors at the waterfront gate at Fruitridge and Ohio Streets. The top of each gracefully sloping hill reveals a different form of recreation -- picnicing, baseball, swimming, playground, reunions.

The city pool at Deming Park always makes a big splash with the kids. The older youngsters can dare each other to jump off the high diving board. Most chicken out and use the low diving board. Tots enjoy the shallow end of the pool. Swimming is safe in the water purified with chlorine.

An extensive, inventive playground arouses the imaginations of kids. The playground hums with activity. A kid becomes Buck Rogers in the 25th Century as he zooms down a slide housed in a rocket-shaped structure. Kids think they are having fun when in reality they are exercising their young muscles.

Nothing is too high to climb or slide down. And it never fails -- there's always that one kid who insists on climbing up a slide. Of course, swings fascinate us earth-bound humans. Deming has plenty of swings, even for the grown-up adult "kids" who never forgot the thrill of touching the sky.

## NEW GOSHEN SCHOOLHOUSE

The nearly century-old New Goshen schoolhouse provides kids -- and parents -- a fascinating lesson that cannot be learned from a book or classroom experiences. The two-room, red-brick schoolhouse also shows students how fortunate they are to learn in the more relaxed environment of the new elementary schools.

One can almost hear the teacher's ruler crack down on Spanky's knuckles for putting Amy's pigtails in the inkwell. In 1970, the Vigo County Park Department renovated the old schoolhouse to resemble the turn-of-the-century era. Some parents may experience *deja vu* -- the strong feeling of having been in the same place at some time in the past -- since the last few elementary classes graduated from here in not-so-long-ago 1955. Still standing in the corner is the pot-bellied stove and coal scuttles. McGuffey readers line the antique desks. The old blackboard is virtually hidden in a cloud of chalk dust.

A second room remodeled with modern furniture serves as a meeting place for Fayette Township residents.

The old school lies in New Goshen



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# Summer is children



Photo by C. Morgan



*Creative playground at Deming Park*

*Combing wool at Pioneer Days at Fowler Park*



*Fairbanks Park on the Wabash River*



**Photos  
by  
Carl Roger Orth**

*Swimming at Fowler Park*





# Area Park Directory

A complete listing of parks in The Terre Haute area.

The city of Terre Haute maintains 19 parks. For location and other information, call the park department at 232-2727. Swimming pools will open June 9. Pool hours are usually 12 Noon to 6 p.m.

## COMMUNITY PARKS

**SPENCER F. BALL**, 15th and 8th Avenue, 9.8 acres. Softball and baseball diamonds. New construction authorized.

**DEMING PARK**, Fruitridge Ave. and Ohio Boulevard, 160 acres. Swimming pool, playground, archery, three tennis courts, softball, ovens, shelters, picnic area, ice skating and sledding. Call to reserve shelters or the Larrison Pavillion. Open 8 a.m. to dusk year around.

**DOBBS MEMORIAL GROVE AND NATURE CENTER**, Poplar Street near Highway 46, 105 acres of evergreen forest. Fishing, playground, ovens, shelters, nature preserve, bird observatory. Open 8 a.m. to dusk year round.

**PAUL DRESSER MEMORIAL PARK**, west of Wabash River Bridge on U.S. 40, six acres.

**FAIRBANKS PARK**, 400 South First Street from Swan to Cruft, 104 acres with sloping hills with riverfront view of Wabash River. Gardens under development. Serves as site of the annual Banks of the Wabash Festival. Girl Scout offices and YWCA lie adjacent to the park. Outdoor stage, Chauncey Rose Memorial.

**HULMAN LINKS**, east of Terre Haute on U.S. 40, 230 woodland acres. Picnic areas and 18-hole golf course.

**CHARLES T. HYTE COMMUNITY CENTER**, 13th and College, 5 acres. Playground, basketball, volleyball, tennis.

**WILLIAM S. REA PARK**, Seventh Street and Davis Avenue, 160 acres. 18-hole golf course, two practice ranges, nine lighted tennis courts, remodeled clubhouse and concessions snack bar.

**TORNER PARK**, Fourth and Farrington Streets, 1.34 acres. Playground, basketball, volleyball.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

**BRITTLEBANK PARK**, 20th and Grant Streets, 8 acres. Playground, picnic area, three tennis courts.

**COLLETT PARK**, 2100 N. 7th St., 21 acres. Playground, picnic area, shelters,

four tennis courts, softball, horseshoes, and shuffleboard. Call to reserve pavillion for meetings.

**CURTIS GILBERT PARK**, 16th and Wabash Avenue, 3.85 acres. Playground and picnic area.

**HERZ-ROSE PARK**, 15th and Locust, 5.18 acres. Playground, picnic area, basketball, volleyball.

**MEMORIAL PARK**, Eighth Avenue and Fourth Street, 9.77 acres. Playground, picnic area, softball.

**SHERIDAN PARK**, 28th and Beech Streets, 6.5 acres. Playground, picnic area, basketball, volleyball, softball and swimming pool.

**THOMPSON PARK**, 17th and Oak Streets, 4.73 acres. Playground, picnic area, basketball, volleyball.

**VOORHEES PARK**, Voorhees Street and State Road 63, 17.4 acres. Playground, picnic area, shelters, basketball, volleyball, softball and swimming pool.

## BLOCK PARKS

**BOY SCOUT PARK**, Lafayette and Barbour Avenue, .32 acres. Picnic area.

**GRAHAM PARK**, 1400 S. 7th St., .96 acres. Playground and picnic area.

## COUNTY PARKS

**FLESHER WOODS**, 38 acres.

**LEE FIELDS RECREATION**, West Terre Haute on former Concannon School property. Playground, shelters, basketball, baseball.

**FOWLER PARK**, six miles south of Terre Haute along U.S. 41. Wooded area over much of 140 acres with lake and beach. Swimming, boating, picnics, ovens, hiking, fishing, camping. Camping costs \$3 a night for electricity. Historical log cabins in the Pioneer Village stand at the entrance. Serves as site for annual Pioneer Days during the first weekend in October.

**HUNT'S NATURE CENTER**, 11 miles south of Terre Haute along State Road 63. Some 53 acres displays a sequence of forest and plant flora, including scarce and endangered species. Open for guided tours only. Call the Vigo

County Parks and Recreation Department for reservations.

**LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE**, New Goshen, northwest of Terre Haute. Two-room elementary school built in 1888 preserved as two-acre park. Playground, meeting rooms.

**PRAIRIE CREEK PARK**, 13 miles south of Terre Haute. Access from either U.S. 41 or S.R. 63. Isolated 100 acres with picnic area, fishing, boating, hiking and playground. Camping costs \$3 per night for electricity.

**GEORGE AND IDA SMITH PARK**, Prairieton. Playground, basketball.

## OTHER RECREATIONAL SPOTS

**GLENN RECREATION CENTER**, 6835 Wabash Ave. just past Seelyville. Tennis, baseball, football and basketball, Gymnasium area. Meeting place for Lost Creek Senior Citizens, daily lunch program for senior citizens, arts and crafts club and other groups.

**PIONEER VILLAGE**, several miles west of Terre Haute on I-70. A private development featuring five authentic log cabins circa 1840 restored and furnished by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ray. Call the Rays at 533-2234 for information and appointments for guided tours.

**BRIARPATCH HERB FARM**, 2000 S. Fruitridge Ave. Open 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Call 232-6283.

**HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF THE WABASH VALLEY**, 1411 S. 6th St. Maintained by Vigo County Historical Society. Open 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday through Friday for tours of 12 "theme" rooms decorated with antiques, such as the country store. Serves as site for June 15 Antique Flea Market. Other times by appointment. Closed Saturdays and holidays. Call 235-9717.

**PAUL DRESSER HOME**, Fairbanks Park. Maintained by the Historical Society. Open 1 to 4 p.m. Sundays. Other times by appointment. Call 235-9717.

**MARKLE HOUSE**. Located in North Terre Haute. Maintained by the Historical Society. Call 235-9717.

## City Parks Summer Recreation Programs

Swimming Pools -- 12 Weeks (Mon. June 2nd -- Sun., Aug. 25th) at Sheridan & Voorhees. (Sat., June 2nd -- Sun., Aug. 25th-Aug. 30-31-Sept. 1) at Deming 12 noon-6 p.m.

Playgrounds -- 10 Weeks (June 9 -- Aug. 15th) at Collett, Brittlebank, Sheridan, Rose, Thompson and Voorhees 9-12 - 1-4 p.m.

Organized Tennis -- 10 Weeks (June 9th -- Aug. 15th) at Collett & Rea 9-12 noon -- 1-4 p.m. Organized instruction and controlled play tournaments.

Baseball -- 10 Weeks (June 9th -- Aug. 15th at Memorial & Sheridan Parks 9 a.m. - Noon -- 1-4 p.m. Organized instruction and controlled play tournaments.

Fastpitch and Slowpitch Softball -- 16

Weeks (May 12th -- Sept. 1) at Memorial Park. 6-10 p.m. Organized team play and tournaments.

Nature Center -- On going activities at Dobbs Park.

Note: Spencer Park will not be used for baseball this year due to a renovation project there.



northwest of the city. It is accessible from either U.S. 150 or S.R. 63.

### FOWLER PARK

Fowler is the county's biggest park, carved out of 140 acres about 10 miles south of the city.

A remarkable facsimile of a pioneer settlement of log cabins marks the entrance of the park. Men and women dressed like their pioneer ancestors during Pioneer Days (on the first weekend of October) complete the stunning illusion.

The Fowler beach always appeals to kids. Youngsters tackle the water like the Dallas Cowboys offensive line. Lifeguards observe the activity from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Hourly rest periods of 10 minutes ensure safety.

The huge lake also lures fishermen in the elusive pursuit of bass, catfish, bluegill and many other varieties of fish. Nothing like fishing to soothe frayed nerves!

By the time water streams out of your ears, head down the three miles of winding trails wide enough for horses.

Settle down for some good conversation at the picnic shelters. The shelters can be reserved for free or the "log cabin" barn with a concrete floor can be rented for \$10 a night.

At night the campers come out. Many prefer to park at a spot with an electric outlet for \$3 a night. Others choose the "primitive sites." They rough it without electricity for \$2.50 a night (although all campers can avail themselves of water and waste disposal services.)



*Tranquil scene at Prairie Creek Park*

*Photo by Carl Roger Orth*

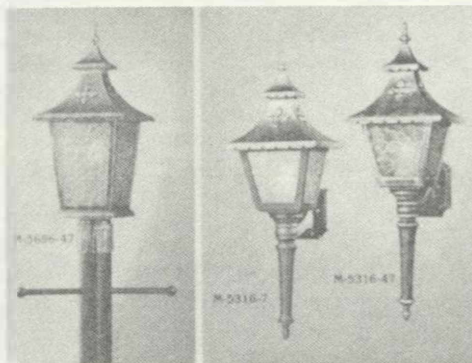
### DOBBS MEMORIAL GROVE

The John S. Dobbs Memorial Grove Nature Preserve attracts many wildlife enthusiasts to the city facilities ½ mile west of the junction of state roads 42 and 46 on Poplar Street. They ache to catch a fleeting glimpse of a deer, unique birds and other wildlife. To facilitate wildlife

study, the city built a special structure nestled in a heavily wooded area. The building contains one-way mirrors for windows which are particularly beneficial to wildlife photographers. The environmental study area is listed in the Indiana Camping and Outdoor Recreation Guide.

Dobbs park also boasts picnic shelters and a lake stocked with plenty of fish.

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By Dorothy Clark

The City of Terre Haute is blessed with many beautiful parks. Its citizens are well above the national average in park area per capita with over 950 acres of city park property.

W. S. Rea donated 160 acres located at 7th and Davis Ave. Part of this acreage is now the 18-hole Rea Park Golf Course. His wife, Mrs. Geraldine Rea, donated the fine clubhouse. Lighted tennis courts have been added.

The only riverside park, Fairbanks Park, located at 1st and Park streets, was donated by the late Crawford and Edward P. Fairbanks and Mrs. Helen Fairbanks.

This 38-acre property contains the Chauncey Rose Memorial (facade of the former Post Office) and Amphitheatre, Sunken Gardens, part of Dresser Drive, the restored Paul Dresser Birthplace (Indiana State Shrine and Memorial as well as listed on the National Register of Historic Places), and the Mineral Water Fountain. In earlier days, the city's first public swimming pool was located within the park, but has been removed.

Collett Park, the oldest city park, contains 21.10 acres at 7th and Maple Ave. It was the gift of Josephus and Josephine Collett, parents of Mrs. Crawford Fairbanks.

Spencer Ball Park, 14th and 8th Ave., was named for Spencer Ball, former newspaper editor, as he left income from approximately \$25,000 for the use of the Park Department. Used as a baseball field, the park contains 9.86 acres.

Demas Deming donated Deming Blvd., along with \$50,000 for improvements, and the city named Deming Park for him. It contains 160 acres east of Fruitridge and Ohio, a duck pond, kiddy rides, a modern swimming pool, and the Larrison Pavilion.

Torner Park and Community House was donated by Rebecca Torner at 4th and College Ave. Simon Levi donated income from \$50,000 for music in the parks after the death of his sister.

A portion of Steeg Park was donated by the Beach and Gilbert families. It contains 3.85 acres at 14th and Wabash Ave. Familiarly known as "Hobo Park" through the

years, the park was renamed "Gilbert Park" at the urging of the families.

Booker T. Washington Park, 5.32 acres at 13th and College, was the city's only exclusively black park and contained a swimming pool which has been razed. It is now the site of Hyte Community Center.

Sheridan Park, 28th and Beech St., contains 6.5 acres donated by Frank Miller, Albert Owen and Felix Blankenbaker. It now contains one of the city's modern swimming pools.

Some of the other city parks are Herz (or Rose) Park, 5.18 acres at 15th and Locust St.; Voorhees Park, 17.4 acres at Voorhees and Prairieton Road, which contains a swimming pool; and Memorial Park with its sunken athletic field of 9.77 acres at 4th and 8th Ave.; and Graham Park, at 17th and Dean, which has .96 acres.

Triangular ground at Lafayette and Barbour Avenues, known as Boy Scout Park, is the city's smallest park of .21 acre. Thompson Park, 17th and Ohio, has 4.73 acres.

The Stadium Park at 30th and Wabash Ave. offers a nine-hole golf course on its 51.30 acres. The Stadium is owned and operated by Indiana State University.

East of the city on Poplar Street is Dobbs Park with nature trails and study areas for students.

New park properties and facilities are being added with the Brittlebank will bequest, and Tony Hulman's gift of a new 223-acre golf course at the east edge of the city.

Terre Haute now owns over 950 acres of city parks, many with new children's playground equipment. Flower beds, shrubs and trees are being added to beautify one of the finest park systems in the country.

Back in 1908, the city was in a turmoil about its parks. The City Council had been in a state of unrest for some time about the possible locations for new city parks, what properties should be secured, and what should be the disposition of the funds resulting from the \$70,000 bond issue.

There was no half-hearted or uncertain note in the mayor's plain statement of his personal views. He was con-

vinced that the city should secure that portion of the Pflaging property that lies north of Elm street between 15th and 16th streets. He was confident that the city could acquire what was known as Parsons' Field on South Seventh for a city park.

The board of trustees of the Indiana State Normal School (now ISU) was receptive to the idea. Mayor Lyons was also in favor of securing that part of the river front for a park lying south of Walnut street upon which the artesian well was located. Also that part lying north of the bridge known as the Nelson-Morris property. He advised condemnation proceedings be instituted at once against the Pflaging and river front properties.

When the ordinance was passed concerning the \$70,000, it was understood that the money should be applied to the erection of a crematory and the remainder should be used for park purposes. Mayor Lyons proposed to do just that. If there was any residue of the bond issue, he believed it should be applied as far as it would go towards beautifying Chestnut Place Park, Memorial Park, the Pflaging Place, Parsons' Field and Riverside Park.

Mayor James Lyons was nearing the end of his second term in office, and according to the law of that time, could not succeed himself again. He was 49 years old. His children included Mayme, aged 22 years; Helen, 19; Margaret, 17; Anna, 14; Gertrude, 12, and James Jr., aged nine.

"Parks & Recreation" (1930)

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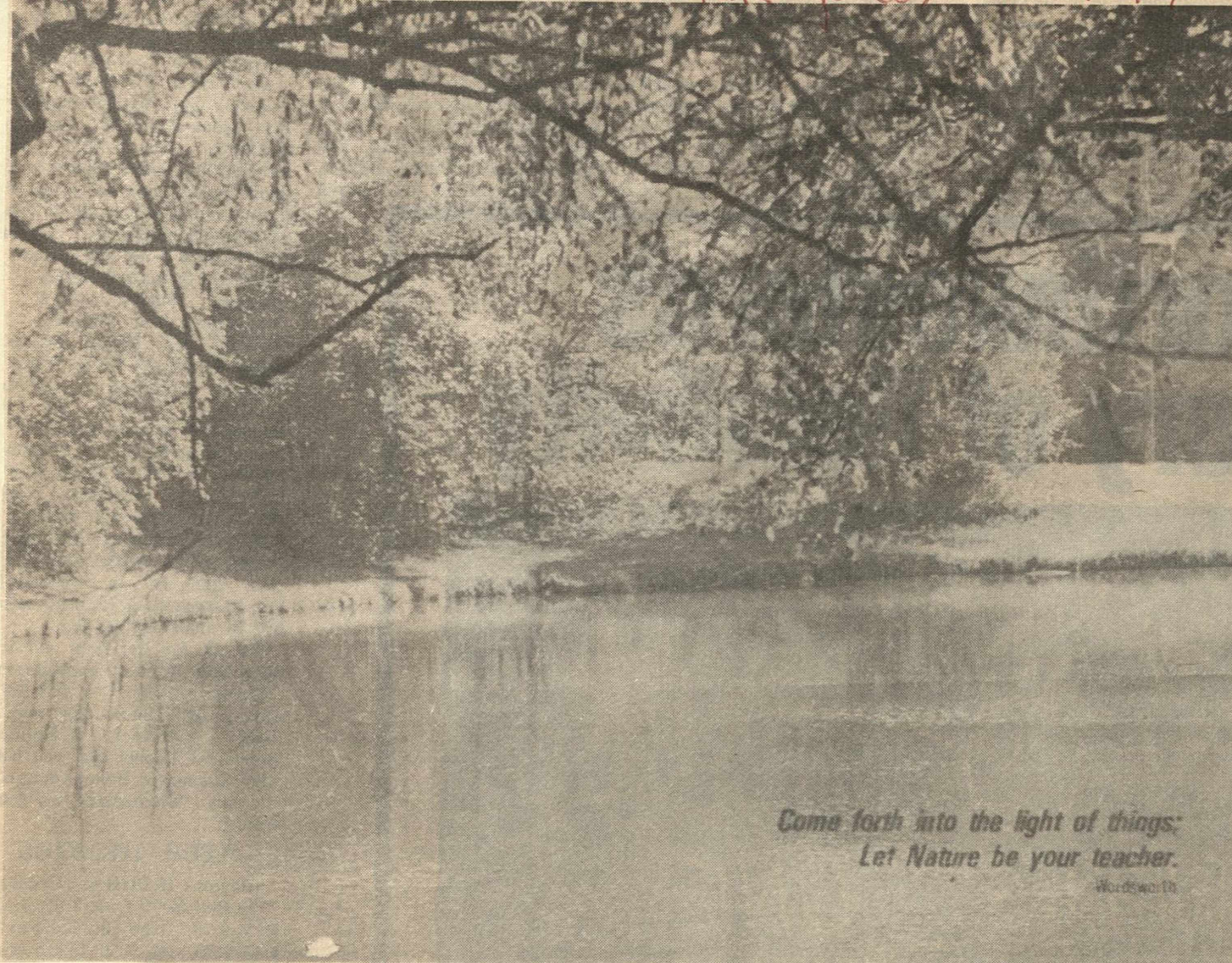
VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LI  
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA



# This week: A look at Terre Haute parks

Indiana  
Statesman

Parks and Recreation (Vigo Co) 4-27-79



*Come forth into the light of things;  
Let Nature be your teacher.*

Wordsworth

By Dale Bell

What do Josephus and Josephine Collett, Crawford and Edmund Fairbanks, John G. Dobbs and Demas Deming all have in common? Well, if you're like me you scratch your head or pull your nose and say "What?"

The last names are the common denominator. All of these people donated land to Terre Haute for parks and these parks were subsequently named after them.

Deming Park, located east of Ohio Street, is the largest and most utilized. On any beautiful Saturday or Sunday you should get there early. (If you don't, you might end up driving around it three times and still not find a place to park.)

There are reasons for this. On its 160 acres, Deming Park has a duck pond, fishing pond, tennis courts, swimming pool and Larrison Pavillion. It also has a park within, Kiddieland Park. This is a modern facility with rides and activities for children.

But most of all, Deming provides a place for young and old alike to meet regularly. This is particularly true of teenagers and young adults, who provide most of the human scenery.

If you like to visit Mother Nature, the John G. Dobbs Memorial Grove may be what you're looking for. Commonly known as Dobbs Park, it offers "scientific value, quiet beauty and natural features," just like the brochure says.

Dobbs Park's 105 acres can be found on Poplar Street near U.S. 46. Included is a one-and-a-half-acre lake and 14 acres of original woodland. A person who knows

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his plants could find up to 323 different species. A life science major might spy 114 species of animals, two as rare as the great Blue Heron and the pileated woodpecker.

There is also the Nature Center Building. Here one can see a different array of displays. You can speak with naturalists and observe wildlife close-up from an observation post inside the center.

However, if you want to go someplace nearby for some peace and quiet, there is Fairbanks Park. It is virtually the reverse of Deming Park.

Fairbanks Park is Terre Haute's only riverside park, located behind Montgomery Wards. It does not receive too many visitors at one time. During

the day these visitors are usually people who are on their lunch break. Every once in a while, though, you may find a lone man sitting on the bank of the river with a fishing line stretched out into the water.

There's plenty of space to walk and run around on, although it is hilly. Much of its 38 acres is open grass. But on the south end is an area known as the Sunken Garden. This is a modern leisure facility with lilac bushes lining the four walkways that lead to the center.

You will see a couple of historical monuments at Fairbanks Park. One is an old amphitheater that is still used at times today. It was also where the former post office was located.

The other monument is an old house. This is the restored birthplace of Paul Dresser.

Dresser wrote the Indiana state song, "On the Banks of the Wabash."

Now, except for the fact that it's located at Seventh Street and Maple Avenue, Collett Park is similar to Fairbanks. It is quiet, grassy, not crowded and puts you in touch with Terre Haute history.

Collett Park is the smallest of the four, only 21 acres. However, it is the oldest park in Terre Haute. The land was donated to the city in 1883. There is also one other similarity that Collett Park shares with Fairbanks. The Colletts were the parents of Mrs. Crawford Fairbanks.

So, if you're sitting around complaining that there's nothing to do in Terre Haute, visit one of these parks. If there truly isn't anything to do, there isn't a better place to not do it.



# TERRE HAUTE'S SOCIAL SIDE.

Something About Its Old Families  
and Entertainments.

Recollections of the Early Days  
and Social Events of More  
Recent Times.

Its Clubs and Societies—A Letter in the  
Indianapolis News of Today, Writ-  
ten by Miss Rebecca A.  
Insley.

Miss Rebecca A. Insley, the Society editor of the Indianapolis News, has been in the city this week. The result is an exceedingly bright and interesting article in the News of today on social events in the history of Terre Haute. Miss Insley is well-known here in Terre Haute where she was born and spent all her girlhood and which was her home until she accepted the place on the News which she now fills so ably and to the advantage of the great newspaper of which she is a staff member. Following is the article: (Staff Correspondence Indianapolis News.)

Terre Haute, Ind., Oct. 29.—Terre Haute, "on the banks of the Wabash," has a social position among her sister cities both prominent and brilliant. But one of the finest race tracks in the world, and one of the biggest distilleries, are the things for which she is more generally noted, and as these often go with a wide-open town and a low standard of refinement, "Terry Hut," as the brakemen say, has suffered accordingly. But in the elegance of her entertainments, their elaborateness and their good taste she is attractive to an uncommon degree.

There are still remaining a few of the men and women who came in the first decade of the present century, helped to settle the little village which has grown into the present city, and organized the social circles which have become historic. Mrs. Warren, who as a child of three years was brought on horseback from Virginia in 1836, remains still a woman of charming presence, pleasing manners and rare conversational power. She is fond of telling of the old days and of the courtly gentlemen and beautiful women who made up society. There was a strong southern element in it, and blue blood was highly prized. "Uncle" Harry Ross, the father of a large family, most of whom are still in Terre Haute, has passed safely the ninety-seventh milestone, and has turned over to numerous grandsons and granddaughters the social duties he formerly bore so well.

## FIRST DANCING SCHOOL.

Mr. J. O. Jones, who is called by his friends "that young man of eighty-four," remembers well when the first dancing school was formed in 1833. A hotel known as the Prairie House, where the Terre Haute House now stands, in the center of business, was then on the very edge of town, and the merry-makers would either go on horseback or in large conveyances in a party.

But before that time, functions at the Eagle and Lion, which stood near the river, had become so well known that many a gallant of Vincennes would stow his dancing pumps in his saddle-bags and come on horseback to see the pretty girls and enjoy with them the graceful quadrille or the romp of the Virginia reel. The Fourth of July was the society event of the year. Assembling in the largest room of the tavern, some gentlemen, with

others bearing a fine voice, would read the Declaration of Independence, after which there would be a big dinner, ending with a dance. The society girls made their own party gowns, and themselves prepared the refreshments which the guests enjoyed. The first carriage was brought from the east, and it created a sensation with its silver-mounted harness and its calash top, as the officers of the fort rode in it to make formal calls.

Some of the names of that time are those of Judge Huntington, Colonel Blake, Dr. Daniels, Dr. Modestitt, Curtis Gilbert, Judge Deming, Judge Coleman, W. D. Griswold, afterward the millionaire of St. Louis; Major Dewies, Lucius Scott, W. J. Ball, James Farrington, Beebe Booth, Chauncey Rose, the Warrens, the Crufts, the Krumbhaars, the Donaldsons, the Earlys, the Crawfords, the Jenckes, the Wassons, the Colletts, the Gookinses and the Hagers.

## EVENTS OF THE FORTIES.

Early in the forties an event in society was the loss of a number of young men, who caught the California fever. Among them was Newton Booth, whose early success in love affairs was followed by financial success and honors in the world of politics. He left behind him many a girl friend, who followed his fortune with eager interest, and so the story goes, greeted him on his return visits with beating heart and blushing cheeks. Somewhat later on another event was the introduction of the young lawyer, Richard Thompson, now deeply loved and generally rated as Terre Haute's most distinguished citizen.

One finds today in the society of the city most of the old names, with numbers of others; among them the McKeens, which are old to all except a small circle which is ever growing smaller. The gaiety of the early history is repeated and has not diminished with the years. The leaders in it are commonly acknowledged to be the W. R. McKeens, whose New Year balls began in 1855, were so brilliant and successful that they became yearly events until recently. The Bachelors' Assembly was another yearly affair which excited unusual interest. Its discontinuance, a few years ago, caused much regret, but in February of last year the Bachelors' ball, at company B's armory eclipsed any of these assembly dances, and society said it was willing to wait several years for another such a one. The hosts were sixteen well-known men, and nearly 500 guests responded to the invitations. Matrons in handsome gowns were there as chaperones, and a memorable program of forty dances kept the two orchestras busy, and was finished just at the break of day.

## MEMORABLE BALLS AND WEDDINGS.

The masque ball of Mr. and Mrs. Frank McKeen, in 1838, was the first one of its kind, and by many is considered as elegant as any Terre Haute has ever seen. It was held in the blue room of the Knight Templars' hall. The Terre Haute House has also been the scene of the numerous balls of the Home Circle Club, which meant the mustering of general society for its best effort of the year. These entertainments will be especially remembered for the decorations, which used to turn the hotel building into a succession of flower-lined bowers, with grottos and ferneries showing scolded nooks and tiny lights of every color, and in many a different design peeping out. Strange to say, Terre Haute has danced only once in recent years for charity. A large sum was realized, and the ball appeared to be eminently successful in a social sense, but it has never been repeated. Among the private entertainments which have been especially large were the parties of Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Ren, Mr. and Mrs. Merrill Smith, Mrs. S. S. Wheeler, for her son Deming and daughter Sophie, which were held at the Terre Haute House. Mr. and Mrs. George W. Bennett's dinner parties have been distinctively elegant and elaborate.

St. Stephen's Episcopal church has seen many notably beautiful weddings. Three of Mr. W. R. McKeen's sons were married in this church. Mr. Frank McKeen was married there to the handsome Miss Mary McGregor, and years afterward Benjamin and Samuel Crawford McKeen were married there to two sisters, Anna and Henrietta Strong. The wedding of Miss Florence Hussey to Mr. Samuel Early, in this church, was a wedding of elaborate and elegant appointments. Another memorable wedding at the same place was that of Miss Mary Whonhart

and Mr. Lester Watson, at which a chorus of young ladies sang the bridal chorus from "Lohengrin." Other large weddings, which were not church affairs, but were held at hotels, were that of Miss Mary Tuell and Mr. Horace M. Smith, when Miss Tuell's father was the proprietor of the old Terre Haute House; that of Miss Emma Arnold and Mr. Theodore Frank, and, last season, that of Miss Bertha Herz and Mr. Adolph Joseph. Among the home weddings which will go down in the annals of society was that of Miss Sadie Fairbanks and Mr. Bruce Falley, a few months ago, at which the floral decorations surpassed any previous efforts in the same line.

## TERRE HAUTE CLUBS.

The city has a club for men which bears its own name and has a club-house which women have frequently used on special occasions. One of the largest euchre parties was given there last spring by Mrs. Stephen Young, at which guests occupied forty tables. But the old club is the Ft. Harrison club, which keeps house modestly on Wabash avenue. D. W. Minshall, W. R. McKeen, W. C. Ball and Ray G. Jenckes are among its supporters, and it is no rare occurrence to see Colonel Thompson driving down there for a quiet game of euchre. The Phoenix club, composed of young men among the Hebrews, has a suite of handsome rooms which are open every night in the week, once a week for a dance for the ladies, and twice a month in the afternoon for the ladies to play whist.

The literary clubs form an element in the city's social life which must be taken into account. For the men there is the Terre Haute Literary society, and for the women the Woman's club, the Saturday Circle, the Friday Reading club, the Young Woman's club, the Irving Circle, the Tuesday club, the Hawthorne club, the Winona Reading Circle, the Wednesday club, the Portfolio club, the English club and the Clio club. The Terre Haute Musical club and the Treble Clef have done much for the music of the city. The Terre Haute clubs will next spring entertain the general federation of the state, and plans have already been formed to entertain the visitors with a banquet, with theater parties and affairs of a social nature such as the federation does not always enjoy.

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS THIS SEASON.

Society in the city this winter has started well and with its best foot foremost, as was indicated by the floral parade in the street fair early in October. The Ringgold band headed the procession, and, marching to its strains, were the marshal of the day and his staff, followed by a party of cavaliers in advance of the flower-bedecked carriages. Mrs. Harry J. Baker drove that day a big bay horse to a trap covered with pond lilies in full bloom. Riding with her were Mrs. L. J. Cox, Mrs. Allen H. Donham and Miss Lucia Crut Brookaw, wearing costumes in green and white, with large white hats, and carrying parasols garlanded with lilies. The trap of Mrs. W. H. Soale was almost covered with white roses and American Beauties. The white harness was decorated with white roses, and a number of pretty girls filled the trap, wearing white duck dresses and picture hats, adorned with American Beauties. Mrs. Charles Baum drove a Russian carriage, in the decoration of which over four thousand scarlet poppies were used, and Miss Gertrude Willen held the lines over three black horses, the phaeton being in chrysanthemums of three shades, from lavender to purple. A tally-ho almost banked with yellow roses, attracted attention, and carriage after carriage followed one another, each calling forth admiration.

With the memory of such a success Terre Haute opens her social season. Into that the new golf club will enter, and everything indicates that by next spring the Indianapolis golf club will have a new rival. Mr. Jay H. Keyes is the president. Spencer F. Ball is the vice president, H. J. Baker the secretary and Samuel Crawford McKeen the treasurer of the club. Already grounds and a club house have been secured and there are a number of enthusiastic players. Among them are Lewis J. Cox, of the Terre Haute car works, and H. E. Allen, the superintendent of the main line of the Vandalia.

Recreation  
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T. H. GAZETTE Oct 29, 1898



#### VARIOUS SOCIAL FORCES.

There is the Thursday Wheeling club left over from last summer, its forty members apparently prepared to keep up the organization all winter in some form or another. The Woman's league at the Normal school is becoming more and more important in society. There is the Rose Polytechnic, which means a number of parties—the Rose Polytechnic which furnishes many a ball in town and when it closes in June, casts a beauteous gloom where brightness had shone before. Bowling has just started out, and there is a whisper of a dramatic club, which may possibly take shape and form this winter.

But what will be watched with interest is the Antique Dancing club, named thus by some wag who failed to understand its motives and sympathize with its aims. It is composed of middle-aged professional and business men, who have just awakened to the fact that they have missed many a happy hour and bright illusion which may come through the ball room. It appears that these staid and respectable citizens and their matronly looking wives are becoming graceful dancers, that they throw into it all the enthusiasm formerly expended only on philosophy, law and religion, and that their club bids fair to become as imposing as any of the dancing clubs which have passed before. So, since the fathers and the mothers have become so gay, what may not Terre Haute society expect this winter from the sons and daughters. REBECCA A. INSLEY.



# Early Terre Haute And How Citizens Here Found Amusement

8/22 48

By A. R. Markle.

There was no lack of amusement for boys in those early days when we had no movies, no comic strips and no automobiles. Boys walked to school and frequently walked home for dinner at noon, some of them more than a mile. The street cars ran only from the old Union Depot at Tenth and Chestnut to Eighth, then to Main and west to First street where the old Terre Haute and Cincinnati station had a train a day to Clay City. Once or twice a year Barnum and Bailey, if Bailey had then joined Barnum, and an occasional rival came to gather great crowds from the surrounding country and the great parade with its clowns and parades drew everybody from school if it had not closed for the day.

## Old Swimming Holes.

All summer the boys went forth arrayed in shirt and pants and little else, to the old gravel pit where now stands the Highland Steel plant. There deep water claimed its annual victim but the smaller boys used the little pit to the north of the great one and found the water warmer than the other. The virtues of cold bathing seldom appealed to the smaller fry and as it was only waist deep for them it was much safer. South of the pit next the railroad were huge mounds taken from the top soil over the gravel and on these grew the most delicious strawberries that ever satisfied the appetites of growing boys. This was far from town for most of the youths but no one in those days thought it too far for the enjoyment it provided. Boys of the north end walked a mile or more across lots, some of them out Sixth avenue past the old hospital that later became St. Ann's Orphan Home for girls, others out Locust, then merely a country lane beyond Fifteenth, while still others living farther south patronized the Davis pond, an abandoned gravel pit about Crawford street east of Twenty-fifth. Here, too, were frequent drownings for the water was spring fed and cold except along the shore and deeper than was safe only a little way from the shore. For the boys "down town" the favorite place was the river, either at the old boom logs that held the rafts that came down the river to Johns sawmill or on the opposite side above the wagon bridge.

## Nude Bathers Offended.

This latter was a favorite because of the sheltering willows along the bank but it was frowned upon because women along Water street complained. The chief of police, to whom came complaints, assured one woman that she could see nothing to offend her modesty that far away but she replied that she knew they were naked and that was shameful. Another of the complainants assured the chief that she could see the boys with a spy glass and wanted the majesty of the law to stop it. In those days of over-stressed modesty a committee called on Riley McKee to complain of the nude statue of Mercury atop the bank at Sixth and Main. Riley walked out with them, adjusted his glasses and took a long look. "Well girls," he remarked curiously, "how in the world did you make that out?" The committee retired in confusion and the statue is still there. Now girls don't block the corner.

Before the old canal was filled in for the sewer in 1875 there was some water in it from Third street, but after that the section below Crawford, where now the Milwaukee Road lies, was a famous place for boys of the south end. Barely waist deep and usually warm, great crowds used it and after that they could go to the Rolling Mill and watch the great rolls turn out sheets and bars in long lengths of red hot metal. Another playground was the old glass works a little west of Thirteenth and north of Crawford. Here were delightful crannies in the old kilns and one could crawl down under the old

pot and look up through the tall stack from which in more prosperous days great billows of smoke poured out. And the savage delight that came from finding a few unbroken bottles and smashing them with bricks! Those were the days.

## Circus Grounds.

No boy could resist the circus though it was a trial to have to have father take him there. Father had no use for the circus and the cost of the tickets but felt it was his duty to take junior, though the boy would have preferred going in the afternoon and with his own gang. Father showed little interest in the the menagerie, preferring to get an early seat where the ladies with little but tights on their shapely forms drew the elder irresistibly. Boys had little use for the charms of the ladies and boys that preferred female company were only "sissies." The earliest show grounds had been down town, at Seventh and Main or east of the Canal on Ohio and Walnut but as those became occupied the grounds between Sixth and Seventh, north of Sycamore, became popular and vied with those beyond Gilbert's orchard and south to Walnut.

## Out In The Country.

The National Road from the city limits at Nineteenth was raised four or five feet above the surrounding field and a little east of Twenty-second as now laid out out was a farm whose most attractive portion was a watermelon patch. To crawl under the fence and lying flat on the ground to push a nice melon out of the field, carry it across into the cornfield where under a beautiful walnut tree one could break it open and enjoy its delicious inside from rind to heart was the very acme of happiness. On one occasion Jimmy Bonner and his six-year-old brother with one neighbor called "Curly" and another known as "Ab" succeeded in alarming the farmer. The resulting shot gun blast of fine bird-shot hit Curly in the calf of his leg and screaming with fright he ran the wrong way up the road and the farmer walked out of his gate, picked him up and obtained the names of the other who had fled madly toward home, helping the young member between them. Cur-tain here.

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Recreation (74)

Sunday, February 3, 1952.

## Cock Fights And Turkey Shoots Regaled The Pioneer Resident Here

By A. R. Markle.

Just as in childhood before we have even learned to walk, talk, or smile, there's a constant effort on the part of those who surround us to entertain us.

In many cases we would be better off if they let us entertain ourselves for I have seen children blissfully unaware of their need for entertainment, who were capable of amusing themselves by counting their fingers and toes, and also in trying to get as many of the latter in their mouths as possible. Instead of that the almost human beings that surround them insist on inflicting baby talk or other linguistic performances, all of which the poor victim has to pluck out of his system before he can learn even the language he expects to use in time.

### Entertaining the Public.

As a community grows from a crossroad establishment of a house, a store, and a blacksmith shop, into a town, the inhabitants will drop anything at which they are supposed to be working to listen to some old grandfather tell how he "fit the rebels" or went "marching through Georgia." Great interest is displayed in his account of his foraging and how he stole chickens, silverware, sweet potatoes, or anything else owned by the victims of his raids.

His stories need not, and most often are not true, but the more he embroideries them the more attractive they seem. In time he runs out of listeners, dies, or otherwise disappears, and some other form of entertainment takes his place.

In the early days the semi-annual "Muster Day" came around and the chief entertainment was afforded by the crowd itself. Any old grudges between enemies could then be settled by fist fight or a wrestling match and quite frequently behind somebody's barn a cock fight provided real entertainment. Then, too, there was the rifle practice, shooting at a mark for a price, or most attractive of all a turkey shoot. The old gobbler who was to be the target was enclosed in a box from which his head could protrude when someone imitated his gobble. As he could not gobble back his challenge except by raising his head, the contestant in the match had only a brief period in which to take sight and gain the prize by killing the gobbler. If by any chance he had participated "unwisely or too well" in the favored beverage and by mischance sent his bullet through the box and the gobbler's

body, he paid for the turkey which went to some other contestant.

### The Medicine Man.

The prime occasion for the festivity was the annual visit of the "Medicine Man," who, of course, brought a singer, a banjo picker, or some other form of musical attraction which was free to all. Following his little act of entertainment he offered at a ridiculously small price of fifty cents, his bottle of a remedy which cured anything from ingrown toe nails to bald heads, and all that lay between. Even in those days fifty cents was a lot of money, but as it was guaranteed to cure the ills which man is heir to, and had probably cost the maker only the time required to fill the bottle with his mixture of water, "sarsapariller," hoar hound, asafetida, all colored with sassafras tea and containing a liberal dose of alcohol. The worse it tasted or smelled the better it was supposed to be.

### Paid Entertainment.

We have already discussed entertainments held in the Court house or the yard surrounding it; Occidental Hall at Third and Main, The Dowling Hall on north Sixth and the Opera House at Fourth and Main, all of which have passed into history.

Up to about 1896 the northwest corner of the block between Seventh and Eighth and Wabash and Cherry had been vacant. But in 1896 the movement started which resulted in the erection of the first of the large theater buildings in Terre Haute which exist at the present time.

In accordance with the time honored custom it was named The Grand Opera House. To insure it becoming a paying venture the building included a great deal of additional space, some of which became first floor business houses with offices above, while the upper floor at one time was an annex of the Terre Haute House. Access to these rooms was available by an overhead bridge which connected the two buildings, forming a corridor.

The theater was a success from the very start. The first performance being "The Isle of Champagne," with Thomas Golden, comedian, and the lovely Catherine Germain as the soprano. The opening was a huge success and launched the Grand on a successful career.

It opened April 21, 1897, and the tickets were placed on sale before the building was even finished. A temporary box office was opened in the lobby with boards laid on scaffolds and Shannon Katzenbach

officiating.

A fairly complete file of the programs used through those early years can be found at The Fairbanks Library, and to the old timers who patronized the theater, there is material for many hours of interesting reading.

### Added Revenue.

These programs consisted of a neatly printed pamphlet extending sometimes to as much as eight pages, the cost supported by advertising. A sample is one of January 8, 1900, when the attraction was "Jack and the Beanstalk," with characters and scenes from "Old Mother Hubbard," whose home was at "Cowburst-by-the-Canal."

In this issue appeared advertisement of Theo. Stahl, China and Glassware, D. W. Watson's Sons Co., W. H. Page & Co., Moore & Langen, Beauchamp's Livery Stable, Wilvert's Confectionary, Columbian Laundry Co., Alex Sandison's Bar, Charlie Ehrmann's Meat Market, Heinig's Dining Room, Dr. Odell Weaver, Hussey's Bank at Fifth and Wabash, Wabash Dental Parlors, Bill McPeak's Restaurant, Dobbs Furniture Store, Ed Hulman's Photo Shop and the entire back page was taken by the Root Store.

The Grand was the first house in Indiana which showed talking pictures, they being the product of the old Vitaphone, which was the pioneer of all the talkies.

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Sunday, July 5, 1953.

## What Terre Haute Did For Amusement In The Latter 'Forties

By A. R. Markle.

THE MATERIAL used in this story is taken from a paper composed by Dr. John J. Schlicher, former professor of Latin in the Indiana State Normal School. The material was so well written that the writer thought his readers would find it amusing.

The temperance movement seems to have been strong in Terre Haute in 1850. There were local branches of both the "Sons of Temperance" and the "Cadets of Temperance," each of which had a hall for its meetings. They received considerable attention, especially the latter. We read of their being especially invited to Sunday School anniversaries, of having Professor Soule read his temperance poem to them, and of voting their thanks for a dinner given them at the Eagle Hotel at Third and Mulberry. It is even a record that Harrison township, in which Terre Haute is located, voted against license in 1848. From a document found in the cornerstone of the old town hall it was learned that in 1843 the saloons or "coffee houses" had been reduced to three, "which were scarcely able to pay expenses." "Liquor, as a beverage, is almost unknown."

The organization called the "Atlantian Litterati" should surely be mentioned. They had well-furnished club rooms and a library and maintained a course of lectures during the winter. One course beginning in January was to contain "six to ten lectures on literary, philosophical and historical subjects" to be given in the society's hall at a cost of \$1.00 for a gentleman or a family. Whether single females were admitted free or excluded, was not stated. But no doubt they went in with the family, for a boarder always counted as one of the family where they stayed.

### Profound Topics.

The subjects of these lectures and of others given about that time are of some interest as showing what people wanted or were willing to hear in those days. Among them were "California," "The Mission of America," "Pythagoras," "The History of Epidemics," "The Siege of Troy," "The Age of Chivalry," "The Statesman," "Rome," "The Vision of Daniel," "The Bright and Morning Star," "The Early History of the Wabash Valley," "Poetry: Its Nature and Influence," "Hungary and Kossuth," "The Influence of Discoveries in Physical Science on Civilization." Other societies also maintained courses, for example the "Mechanic's Historical Society." Many of the lectures were by local men, ministers, teachers, doctors and others.

Other entertainments, somewhat less academic, were also frequent. A Mr. Jackson gave a series of entertainments at the courthouse consisting of imitations of prominent actors and orators, both political and ecclesiastic. They were reported to be considered "First Class" by those

who knew the originals, and to have given great satisfaction to persons who appreciated that class of entertainment.

There was also an exhibition of an oxyhydrogen microscope in the town hall and a vocal concert by the Higgins family.

"It would be good," said the reporter, "to have a conscience as clear as Mrs. Higgins' voice."

Then there was a panoramic exhibition of the Hudson River and scenes from Virginia—with 9,400 yards of canvas, pronounced by artists and critics to be the best work of art ever presented to the public.

It was the time when people were interested in phrenology, also, and a certain Anton gave lectures on the subject for a small fee. He also gave charts and examined heads at Brown's Hotel (on the square), presumably for a larger fee. Of four entertainments about the same time, the lectures on phrenology, a lecture on phonetics, the exhibition of paintings and a company of minstrels, the lectures on phrenology were pronounced the most interesting.

### Indian Wonder.

There were a number of concerts, and finally a "Grand Concert given by one Okah Tubbee, an Indian, who was heralded as "the greatest natural musician in the known world." He put up at the Prairie House and charged 25 cents, and as the papers put it "goes it strong on natural principles and plays exquisitely on several instruments." Nor was this all. He had, in addition, real Indian medicine for sale which would cure some two dozen of the major ailments of mankind, from bronchitis to cancer and from white swelling and toothache to fits. Though he threatened to stay but a few days, his advertisement appeared in the Wabash Courier for several months.

The desire of the people to be humbugged was further satisfied by the circus, the barbecue, the camp meetings, and last but not least, by patent medicines. There were two or three circuses in Terre Haute each year and to judge from their names alone, they must have surpassed each other and everything else. One of them, for example, was Mabie's Grand Olympic Arena and United States Circus.

Recreation (TH)

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#### When Taylor Ran.

As for political meetings, one was held at Fort Harrison, a short distance north of the town, in 1848, during the Taylor campaign, at which a crowd was present estimated at from 15,000 to 30,000 people. They were all fed on the grounds, and it took three speakers, addressing them simultaneously, to give them a chance to hear. General Taylor himself, who had been in command during the "battle" of Fort Harrison in 1812, had been invited to come, but had sent his regrets.

The Fourth of July celebrations usually consisted of processions of the Sunday School children, beginning in some cases as early as seven in the morning, a meeting at which there were songs, the reading of the Declaration of Independence, an oration and prayer, and then a dinner spread in the basements of the churches or in the courthouse yard. There was often a second meeting with speeches later in the day, and even a third, on one occasion at least, in the green wood north of town, with still another collation. Verily, eating and listening to speeches was the order of the day. The event was usually planned by a meeting of the young men at the town hall several weeks beforehand.

In more ways than one, 1850 was the end of one period of thought and behavior and the beginning of another. The time when gentlemen wore stocks and dickeys and strapped their pantaloons under their boots, when girls on skates would have been a phenomenon, when all men chewed fine cut and the spittoon stood in the family pew, and when red-nosed deacons were not uncommon, was about to pass away. Quite naturally in such a time of breaking-up, some extremes of behavior were indulged in.

#### Then Came Miss Webber.

Quite a stir was made at the time, among other things, by a certain Miss Webber's advocacy of male attire for women. Female dress, she said, had been invented by man as part of his tyranny. She advocated that trousers should be worn by women till marriage and by widows till married again. This was evidently an extreme form of the bloomer agitation.

In spite of such temporary aberrations, however, life in Terre Haute in 1850 was on the whole eminently proper. In the winter of 1850-51 it was thought worth recording that a new species of entertainment was coming in, that of "happening in," which was beginning to supersede the old-fashioned parties.

Such parties as we read of were extreme in their innocence. One occurred, for instance, at the home of Judge S. B. Gookins on Strawberry Hill. This was far outside of town at the time so that when the judge moved there he had been obliged to resign his seat in the city council. The party was for the Sunday school children of Mr. Jewett's church, together with a number of "more adult folk." There were strawberries, ice cream and cake, a promenade on the lawn, and music. The naughtiness came a little later, and, as the paper hinted, surreptitiously. "Perhaps in the absence of Mrs. Gookins, and after the stars arose, there may have been a little of the "light fantastic toe" on the grass. But all was serene and quiet by early bedtime."



DO NOT CIRCULATE

# Terre Haute's Fourth Annual Street Fair of 1901

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

From Scottsbluff, Neb., came a letter with a most interesting enclosure. Mrs. Don Everett, whose parents lived in Terre Haute for a few years after their marriage in 1900, was disposing of some of their family papers after their deaths. Among them she found several envelopes advertising the "Fourth Annual Terre Haute Street Fair—Oct. 14-19, 1901."

The 60-year-old envelope is decorated with a red line drawing of Fort Harrison as it was in 1811, the first few bars of the chorus of Paul Dresser's famous song, "On the Banks of the Wabash," and two clowns in quaint costumes.

The national news of President McKinley's assassination crowded all other events from the local newspapers in September, 1901. The first mention of this street fair was the announcement that Secretary Smith was sending out bill posters to advertise the coming event.



Dorothy J. Clark

A reunion of the Sixth Cavalry, 71st Regiment, was also being planned for two days during the week, according to T. F. Brown and M. C. Rankin. They expected more than half of the 450 members of the Sixth Cavalry to attend.

Also in September about 700 local citizens went up to Clinton on a special train to attend the opening of the Clinton Street Fair. They were met at the railroad station by the Majestic Band which joined forces with this city's Junior Order Band and marched to the fair. Clinton boasted that 7,000 people attended their fair on the biggest day.

Pierson Township held a three-day fair on the farm of Abel C. Pierson. Other news reported that the work was held up on the new wing of Union Hospital because of the lack of bricks, and a traveling tinner and pot-mender was stabbed by a local cook who objected to the heating of soldering irons on his cookstove. Whether the coffee pot ever got mended or not was not learned!

## Presidents Change.

On September 14th Pres. McKinley died and Terre Haute went into mourning. Flags were flown at half-mast, buildings were heavily draped and all offices closed. Then Teddy Roosevelt took the oath of office and business went on as usual.

A few days later a delegation representing the local street fair association took part in Brazil's floral parade. Seated in a beautifully decorated buckboard, they rode in the parade. This was Clay County's first street fair.

Instead of the old-time booths, the downtown merchants elected to build decorated arches in front of their stores and light them with colored electric bulbs. Contractor Charles H. Baxter was awarded the contract to erect the arches at Third, Fourth and Eighth on Wabash by the association. In the order named, these were designated as the Japanese, the Court of Honor and the Egyptian.

Hog and sheep barns were built between First and Second on Ohio; horse barns on Ohio between Second and Third and on Second between Wabash and Ohio.

## Gala Opening.

On October 11 the Street Fair opened with a masked carnival on Wabash avenue. Rose Braman was selected queen of the floral parade which included 37 beautifully decorated rigs, four bands and 60 outriders, plus delegates from all the outlying towns.

The next day featured the "Worst Rigs" parade. This drew a large crowd to see the fun.

All the ministers of the area were invited to inspect the side-show and carnival area around the courthouse. The police were ordered to suppress all "hoochie coochie, oriental and muscular dancing." Barkers and spielers for the shows were forbidden to use suggestive language. The use of "horns, megaphones, return balls, rubber-necks, flour, feather dusters, corn or lamp black" during fair week was strictly prohibited.

A six-legged cow on display in the store window at Townley's at 429 Wabash avenue attracted as much attention as the sideshows.

Little did Mrs. Everett know how much research would be instigated because of her gift of the Street Fair advertising envelope she sent me from Scottsbluff, Nebraska!

Samuel Prager, manufacturing jeweler at Fifth and Main streets, was trying to finish the official street fair badges. Three grades of these medals were being readied for sale. One type was heavily rolled in gold and guaranteed for twenty years. The medal was stamped from a steel die with a picture of Fort Harrison as it was in 1811 in the center of the plate which was a little larger than a dollar. Over this was the music for the first line of the chorus of "On the Banks of the Wabash." Selling from a quarter to a dollar, they were put on sale October first.

Again the Street Fair was crowded off the front page. Fresh water pearls of considerable value had been found in the Wabash river by the mussel diggers and everyone was trying to get into the act. Then too, the Grand

Circuit races were running the first week in October, and attracting horse lovers from all over the country.

One of the biggest attractions of the Street Fair was to be the "Country Store" on the southwest corner of Sixth and Wabash. This was in charge of Louis B. Marks, Sheriff Dan Fasig and Charles Gerdink. The net proceeds were divided equally between Union and St. Anthony hospitals.

The Country Store was a burlesque on the old-time general store of 1857 before the Civil War. It featured such characters as the Yankee Fiddler, Slim Jim, Aunt Sarah, the village gossip, Patsy Bolivar, the village fool, the old storekeeper and other characters which made up a "down East" village community. All goods were offered for sale "pig-in-a-poke" fashion. Each wrapped article, some of which were worth five to ten dollars, were sold for ten cents.

## Queen Competition, Too.

Another feature of the Street Fair was the contest to choose a queen of the floral parade. Votes were sold at ten cents each, and again the proceeds were divided between the local hospitals.

Some of the candidates were the Misses Rose Herz, Martha Royse, Hermine Willien, Rose Braman, Rae Walker, Bertha Duenweg, Rose Fehrenbach, Catherine Sendelbach; and Mesdames Maxwell Davis, Frank Ball, George Starr, Emil Myers, Charles Boland and Grace Briggs.

Mr. T. Hidden was the chairman of this event. He announced that the ladies could decorate their own carriages with hand-made paper flowers of their choice, or Mr. Payne, the decorator, would do it for them.

A public wedding was planned for the Street Fair. A special platform was erected on Main street in front of Kleeman's Dry Goods Store. However, I never did learn the names of this lucky couple.

From the Street Fair Association headquarters at Fourth and Main came word that the railroads had agreed to run special trains into town for the week-long event.



# Early Circuses and Show Grounds in Terre Haute

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Last week's column was all about the circus performances that played here from April to September in the year 1873. However, none of the newspaper advertisements mentioned WHERE the show grounds were located, so to get that information I consulted this city's oldest practicing attorney, George A. Scott, who is nearing his one hundredth birthday.

Mr. Scott attended his first circus when he was only four years old. In 1866 the show grounds were located where the Herz-Alden's department store is now located, between Sixth and One-half side of Wabash avenue. He remembers an elephant, a contortionist, and horses galloping around the ring.

A very daring act for those days, according to Mr. Scott, was the female bareback rider wearing short skirts that exposed her bare white limbs to the public gaze. He remembers that she jumped through hoops while standing on the horses's back as it galloped around and around the ring.



Dorothy J. Clark

This location was used as show grounds for many years. Then the McKeen building was built just west of the present Herz building and this cut down the area. Next a large platform similar to a bandstand was constructed on this site across from the Terre Haute House. The structure had a roof but the audience sat on seats under the sun or stars as the case might have been. This was used for band concerts which were so popular in those days, and also as a "wigwam" for political speeches. Mr. Scott remembers the Barnum & Bailey Show there in 1880.

Next, the show grounds were located between Sixth and Sixth and One-half streets, north of Sycamore. The only buildings in the area then were the Peddle house at the northwest corner of Center and Sycamore and a grocery on the northeast corner. There was also a beer depot, as he called it, but no other buildings on the west side of Center street for several years.

From there the showgrounds were moved to the area west of Third street and north of the Big Four to Locust street. The

grounds extended east to Second and even to First street in some places.

## Predecessor of Ball Park.

The southeast corner of Nineteenth and Wabash was the show-grounds before the area was completely enclosed with a fence and used as the ball park for many years.

Within my own memory, the circus was held east of Twenty-fifth street on Wabash avenue. Now that the old-time circuses with their tents, parades and sideshows are only a memory, the more compact traveling circus such as the Shrine Circus that was shown here yesterday can be contained in the Stadium.

Mr. Scott can remember when the circus came to town in brightly colored horse-drawn wagons before the days of the circus train. Usually the shows came to Terre Haute from Rockville and would travel down here on the Lafayette Road. The Scott family lived at 1517 North Seventh street, and had a clear view of Lafayette Road from their house. Before 1870 there was very little construction that far north of town. Mr. Scott and his brother would climb a tree and watch the circus wagons lumber into town, hoping to catch a glimpse of the highly advertised attractions.

Along that same route these same little boys watched the great droves of hogs and cattle being brought to the slaughter houses on the river just south of the Vandalia Railroad. He reminded me that north of Locust street there was much open ground and farm and pasture land.

## Big Event of Childhood.

When the Scott boys were small one of the greatest treats was to watch the circus unloading—either between Fourth and Fifth streets if the train came in

on the Big Four—or between Ohio and Walnut streets if the C&E Railroad was used.

Then while the circus roustabouts were putting up the huge tents the parade would start down Main Street giving everyone a preview of the coming attractions. In its way the circus was educational to the people of the small midwestern towns who were not privileged to see unusual animals of the world in the big-city zoos. Tired of the usual barnyard animals, the exotic sights of the circus animals and the glamorous (seemingly) performers were a welcome change from the routine small-town entertainments.

Mr. Scott told of an incident he remembered from his school days when a circus was located just across from the show-grounds near Center street. To have an exciting circus so near and yet see no chance of attending was most frustrating to these boys so they convinced their teacher that their class in zoology would benefit greatly from a visit to the animals at feeding time.

The teacher probably wanted to see the circus as much as the students, so she agreed to let school out if such a visit could be arranged. A group of the boys talked to the circus manager and got permission for the group to watch the feeding of all the circus animals, and then it just happened to be time for a performance so the group were invited to see the show.

However, since it was not considered proper for little girls to see the circus performance, the teacher kept the little girls outside while the boys went in to see the show. These same unhappy little girls were probably the leaders in the woman's suffrage movement when it came into being!

## Terre Haute's Link.

One of Terre Haute's famous sons, certainly one of the most colorful, was Jerry Mugivan who "joined out" with a small circus here in 1896. Having a positive genius for finance and amazing organizational ability, he learned the circus business thoroughly and soon owned his own show. He and his partner went on to acquire one after the other most of the smaller circuses in the country—the John Robinson Show that I mentioned last week, the Hagenback-Wallace Show, the Sells-Floto Circus, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, the Sparks Circus, the Al G. Barnes Trained Animal Show, the Gollmar Bros. Show and in 1921 the American Circus Corporation was organized to cover the legal handling of all these various properties.

Then in 1929 the circus world was greatly surprised to learn of one of the biggest deals in circusdom. John Ringling had purchased the entire holdings of the American Circus Corporation, including the five circuses and the vast winter quarters in Peru, Ind., and other properties.

Rising from humble surroundings, Jerry Mugivan became one of the most colorful figures in the circus world, a supershowman, a millionaire before he was forty, and as well-known abroad as he was in America.

So, Circus Week is over for another year, and the Shrine Circus has moved on to another town for another performance... but the children and the young-in-heart will wait impatiently for next year's show.

INDIAN ROOM



# When the Circus Came to Town

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

*Int. Star Jul 2 - 1961*

Everyone knew winter was officially over when the circus announcements began appearing in the local newspapers. Free passes were given to the lucky families who allowed their barns or fences to be decorated with the exciting circus posters.

In the year 1873 the first circus was announced for April 12, "for one day only, The Great Eastern Menagerie, Museum, Circus, Aquarium, Roman Hippodrome and Egyptian Caravan!" The advertisement went on to say: "It's augmentation the past winter makes it four times larger than last year, and then it was confessed the Monarch Mastodon of the road. Over a million dollars have been expended to make it the most stupendous and great World



Dorothy J. Clark

Exposition ever attempted. Twelve immense pavilions, covering four acres of ground, and measuring 168,000 yards of canvas, are required to exhibit its 41 dens of living wild beasts, breathing sea monsters, bright plumaged birds, flesh-eating reptiles, and the colossal dual circus exhibitions . . . to transport this Goliath of Shows, 100 cars, 6 passenger coaches and 4 engines are brought into requisition and the services of over 200 men and horses are necessary to the success.

"The double-sized den of 20 snakes, the combined length of which has been ascertained to be over 644 feet of serpents, boa constrictors, pythons and anacondas; the great war elephant "Conqueror" costing \$19,000; the wild Wapiti; drove of Bactrian camels; a chattering world of over 70 varieties of monkeys; 2 lionesses and litters of cubs; a beautiful Sable Antelope; a rare specimen Chikari, king of the Alaskan forests; a pair of African zebras; double-horned rhinoceros; a baby Hippopotamus;

a pair of Malay Tapirs; genuine Alpaca llama; Burmese cow and calf; 2 Zebus; pair of large Chacmas, largest of the Gorilla race; a Mouflon with horns over 4 feet long; Chamois; Gazelles; Elands; Vlacke Varks; Harte Beests; Antelopes; 10 living Lions; pair of Bengal Tigers; Leopards; Hyenas; Panthers; Jaguars; Ocelots, etc. . . . over 300 specimens of birds of all lands including 1 cage of 50 snow white cockatoos."

## Extravagant Parade Plans.

The advertisement went on to tell of the parade planned for 10 o'clock in the morning. It was called a "Grand street pageant and procession over two miles long with an emerald, crimson and gold steam piano which produces the richest music, softer than the melody of the wind-harp, through a lately-invented method of steam. Its tones exhibit four times the power of the grandest organ, and its harmony transports the visitor, as it were, to the land of enchantment; 20 beautiful women and 100 horsemen and pages, mounted, and followed by the cavalcade with their flags, banners and gods and goddesses in oriental costumes, with living tigers, lions and panthers loose in the streets."

Before each exhibition there was a "grand free balloon ascension." All the railroads running into the city have been arranged to bring people at half fare. Admission to the circus was 50

cents for adults and children under 10 for 25 cents. This first circus of the year 1873 was illustrated with a picture of a tiger in mortal combat with a huge snake.

The second circus to come to town that year was "John Robinson's Great World Exposition—Museum, Aquarium, Animal Conservatory and strictly moral circus" on June 19. Their advance publicity told of the "special trains of 200 cars and 15 locomotives . . . the 2,000 men and horses including 100 male performers . . . 60 of the smallest ponies in the world; 20 beautiful lady celebrities, 52 cages of wild beasts, 15 sun-bright tents, 40 musicians, 6 great golden chariots, 3 solid miles of procession . . ." In addition to the list of animals mentioned in the first circus, John Robinson offered a giraffe, sea lions, ostrich, polar bear, yak, vulture and one-fifth of a mile of snakes in a crystal den. Their seating capacity was 15,000 and their prices were the same for two performances. Their half-page ads were well-illustrated with tiny drawings of as many of the attractions as they could crowd in.

Ten days before the John Robinson show was due another circus slipped into town, probably to take advantage of the publicity given to the former one. On June 9 the James Robinson's Champion Circus appeared with "thirty equestrian children on ponies and Prof. Judson's invention of the age, the flying ship of the air." The illustration shows one of the earliest type dirigibles. Whether or not these two Robinsons were related or just rivals in the entertainment business is not known.

The only circus that came to town in July, 1873, was P. T. Barnum's Three-Ring Circus with three performances, morning, afternoon and evening. He advertised "100,000 living, historical and representative curiosities; a sideshow in addition to the circus performance; six famous clowns including the "celebrated Commodore Nutt, The Famous \$30,000 Nutt, introduced to the World for the first time by Mr. Barnum in 1863," and some wild Fiji cannibals.

In August of that year, J. E. Warner's Great Pacific Combination came to town with "five separate and distinct shows under four massive pavilions; 3 baby lions that will be allowed to play with the children, and 7 monster Numidian lions that the children will not be allowed to play with . . . the Great Orton and Son; the Poetry of Grace and Motion represented by Miss Lizzie Keyer; the Greatest Female Gymnast of the age, Miss Leona Dare, styled the Comet of 1873; M'lie Emmie Jatan, the Antepodean Queen; Daniel Seal, the famous London Clown and Court Jester, and Herr Paul Schroff, the Lion King." This show offered cane-seat chairs in the amphitheater for the comfort of show-goers.

Even though Warner's show was billed as "the last and best show of the season," there was still one more circus to come

to town in 1873. This was "L. B. Lent's Leviathan Universal Living Exposition . . . leaves its Fourth Avenue, New York, National Amphitheatre and Zoological Gardens with 500 men and horses, 500 animal captives and 60 car loads of curiosities and will reach Terre Haute on September 5th by double special railroad excursion train to give two exhibitions of its million-dollar New York circus."

In addition to the regular attractions this show featured a working glass steam engine, Bohemian glass blowers and 30 of

the smallest ponies in the world. "The huge highway holiday parade with free view of Sanga and his python pets, and Lengel in the tiger's den."

Now, not one of the advertisements mentioned WHERE the show grounds were located, so, for that information I went to my good friend, George A. Scott, whose 100th birthday we'll celebrate in January. He attended his first circus with his mother when he was only four years old.

Next week I'll tell you more about the early circus shows in Terre Haute. And remember, this is Circus Week here . . . be sure to attend the Shrine Circus next Saturday, July 8, at the Stadium. I'll see you there!

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Parks & Recreation (Vigo Co)

# Park board measure gets local opposition

T FEB 3 1981

By CAROLYN TOOPS  
Tribune Staff Writer

"The present system works. Why change it?" asks Vigo Circuit Court Judge Hugh D. McQuillan about proposed legislation in the Indiana House of Representatives which would change the method of appointment of members of county park and recreation boards.

Four of the six board members — two Democrats and two Republicans — are now appointed by the Circuit Court judge for staggered four-year terms. A fifth member is appointed by the mayor of Terre Haute, and the sixth member, the county extension agent, serves by virtue of his office.

The four-member city park and recreation board, named by the mayor, includes two Democrats and two Republicans, also on a staggered-term basis.

The proposed legislation, House Bill 1948, would have all terms on a board expire at the same time. The removal for cause provision has been eliminated in the proposed legislation.

Keith Ruble, superintendent of the county park system, and Pat Ralston, superintendent of the city system, say they want to continue to run their departments in a professional manner, adding they feel the change in appointment of board members would tend to politicalize the park systems to the detriment of the profession.

The Indiana Park and Recreation Association is opposing the change, though the measure appears popular with some mayors and elected officials.

The IPRA points out that Indiana has had a history of citizen involvement on park and recreation boards

dating back to 1919, when lawmakers created bipartisan boards with staggered appointments which gave stability and continuity. Members could be removed before their terms expired by bringing charges against them and allowing due process to take place.

Subsequent laws, in particular the 1955 Park and Recreation Law, included similar due process procedures for appointed board members.

The current effort for change also includes House Bill 1001, the recodification of certain park and recreation legislation, with HB 1948 addressing the specific issue of appointment.

The IPRA claims the two main ingredients for developing good park and recreation systems at the city, town and county level are a good strong, citizen board and good, qualified staff.

Many outstanding citizens would choose not to serve under a political patronage-oriented board without some guarantee of due process, the IPRA says, adding that a valuable "people" resource would be lost.

Park and recreation services are unique, the IPRA emphasizes, because participation is a matter of choice. This uniqueness of choice calls for an unusual amount of citizen involvement when it comes to the development and maintenance of a broad-based system of park and recreation services, the association says.

HB 1948 has been assigned to the House Cities and Towns Committee, according to Ruble. The IPRA, along with several individuals, plan to oppose the measure during hearings to be scheduled.

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Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library



# City park staff developing policy manual

By ROBIN SCHULBERG  
Staff Writer

S DEC 17 1982

Terre Haute park officials are reviewing a departmental policy manual draft that they hope becomes a model for other city departments as well.

"This is an attempt to say the city needs something like this," Park Superintendent Patrick R. Ralston said. "There need to be some guidelines to operate a governmental unit.

"If questions come up, we will have a departmental policy," he said. "Now I try to be fair but (sometimes) I must use my own gut reaction."

The draft presented by Ralston to the Park Board Tuesday includes ordinances governing the department, employee benefits, work rules, job descriptions, salary policy and purchasing and accounting procedures. It is drawn largely from policies adopted by the Redevelopment Commission in 1981 for the redevelopment department

and was prepared by park department staff.

Non-union city employees now operate under a two-page work policies proposal presented to the city council earlier this year by Mayor Pete Chalos but never approved. It covers work hours, sick leave, holidays, vacation, tardiness — much of the same ground as the park manual. Where the two overlap, they are similar, although in some cases the proposed city policy is stricter.

Chalos said that he plans to raise his proposal again in early 1983 and that it is sufficient to cover most situations.

"Unless it's necessary, the less you legislate the better off you are," Chalos said.

One section of the park manual proposal that may spark discussion is the proposed qualifications for park superintendent. The original draft would have required the park superintendent to have a master's degree in Parks and Recreation or a related field and five years experience. That will be

changed to eliminate the requirement of a master's degree, Ralston said.

The amended qualifications still would more specific than the requirements for the park superintendent post in the municipal ordinances and than the requirements for redevelopment director. They would be similar, though, to the requirements for assistant redevelopment director, although the redevelopment guidelines allow waiver of the degree requirement.

The suggested qualifications for park superintendent are an attempt "to professionalize this department from the superintendent on down," Ralston said.

Political considerations always would play a role in appointments, he said, but the proposed qualifications section would reduce the chances of an appointment based solely on politics. It would reduce the range of mayoral choice in the selection process, he admitted, but said "it should."

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Parks + Recreation (Vigo Co.)

## Mayor gets additional power

T MAR 10 1982

## Park board OKs reorganization plan

By SUE LOUGHLIN  
Tribune Staff Writer

Terre Haute citizens should be happy to know that they now have a park and recreation department — again.

As strange as it sounds, the city department must be re-established to comply with "Home Rule" legislation passed by the 1981 Indiana General Assembly. The park board passed a resolution Tuesday calling for the re-organization and establishment of the department to comply with the new law.

The new legislation also calls for some significant procedural changes within the department: the mayor now has the power to hire and fire the park superintendent; a board member cannot be fired without just

cause; the board must approve "gifts" — such as donations of property — before they are accepted into the park system; also, neither a "municipal executive," nor members of a "municipal fiscal body" will be able to serve on the board.

Despite the re-organization, Pat Ralston, park superintendent, said that 90 percent of the laws affecting his department will remain unchanged and he does not foresee any major changes in the way the department is run.

Nor did Ralston object to the mayor's new powers. "The mayor should have that authority. He ought to be able to pick whomever he wants to operate the department," Ralston said. "But the people who get those

jobs should be qualified by education or experience."

Ralston said he believed that Mayor Pete Chalos has hired department heads with the necessary qualifications.

In the past, the park board has had the final authority regarding the appointment of the park superintendent.

With the adoption of the resolution, the measure creating a "new" park department must now go to the city council. "It must go through the City Council if we are to maintain our taxing powers," Ralston said.

Without such an ordinance, the department could lose its existence, according to Max Woodard, assistant recreation director.

Another change with important

ramifications concerns the removal of a park board member, Woodard said. In the past, a mayor could remove a member at his own discretion. Now, there must be just cause, and if it is the mayor who files the charges, he must appoint an impartial hearing officer. If someone other than the mayor files the charges, then the mayor can act as the hearing authority.

Park officials said that the major thrust behind Home Rule legislation is to return authority back to local units of government. "The whole idea is that local government can better govern itself," Cilla Purcell, special events coordinator, said.

In its 1981 session, the Indiana General Assembly reduced public

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park and recreation statutes to two major laws and five miscellaneous laws pertaining to certain cities, counties and townships, James A. Peterson, a park specialist with Indiana and Purdue universities, said.

In other matters heard by the board:

- Ralston noted that the city council is scheduled to give final approval for a maintenance contract between the park department and the city's sanitary district. In addition to the maintenance of the Lost Creek, Ralston said the department will prosecute those who dump garbage in the Thompson Ditch area.

- An area business has made a verbal commitment to donate a shelter to the Hulman Link Golf

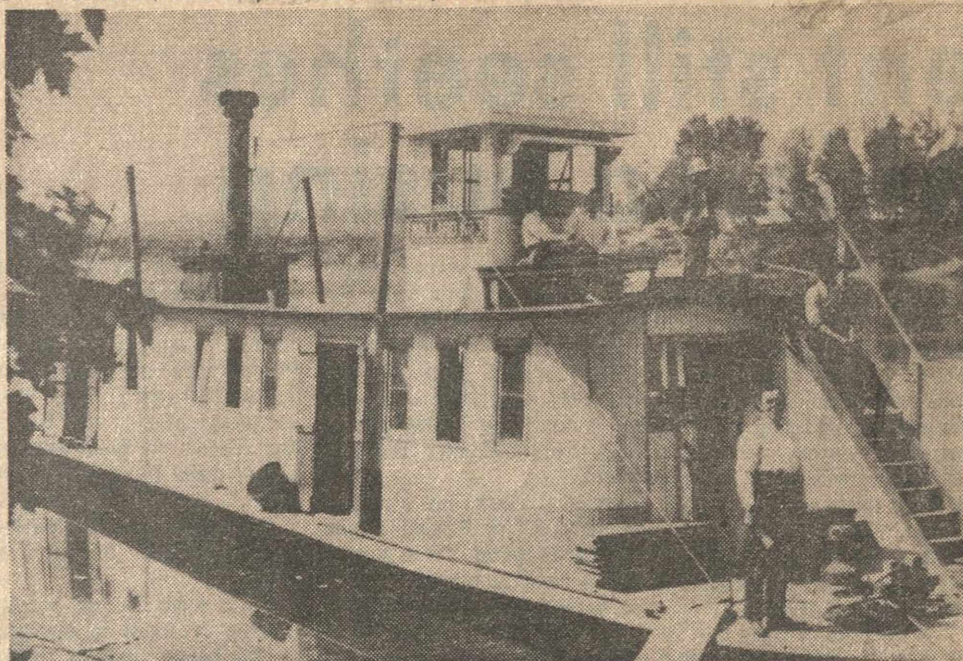
Course.

- The department will be participating in the Community Awareness Night to be sponsored by the local Convention and Visitors Bureau. The event, to take place at Hulman Civic Center April 21, will include representatives of the various area festivals. It is designed to promote tourism in the area. The park department will promote its winter festival.

- A national beer distributor would like to sponsor a raft race from Clinton to Terre Haute as part of the city's July 4 celebration.

- The department has obtained a federal permit to display a great horned owl at Dobbs Nature Center. The city received the owl after it had been electrocuted.





MALLARD NO. 3 — A scene along the Wabash back in 1903 helps Warren Conover recall the days when the craft navigated the waters of the river to offer pleasure to fishermen and duck hunters. The craft operated between 1900 and 1910.

TS NOV 20 1977

### Mallard 3 a worthy craft

## River boat days recalled

By ROB ALLEN  
Tribune Staff Writer

A rising July sun still sleepily flowing on water and a bird feathers its way along shore stopping intermittently to breakfast on waking insects.

Suddenly, a sheer whistle blows and black smoke ruffles skyward from the rocking water craft.

With beer mugs raised and hearts as high, the men on the Mallard No. 3 make ready for its weekly voyage from Walnut Street to Fort Harrison Fishing Camp.

From 1900 to 1910—"or there about," says former Terre Haute resident Warren Conover—the Mallard and other boats made their way up and down the Wabash carrying with them fishermen and duck hunters and just plain fun-lovers.

"The Mallard No. 3 was owned by a Terre Haute group of men who hunted ducks and fished all the way from Terre Haute to Lafayette," writes

Conover, now a Culver, Ind., resident.

"A Charles Sikes, who was agent for the Indianapolis Brewing Co., seemed to be in charge of the boat. Craig Higgins was the pilot and the engineer (and fireman) was Mike Kiley. Both were licensed by the government."

Conover said he was 13 years old when the 50 foot long Mallard plied its way up and down the Wabash.

"The Mallard used to run to Fort Harrison almost every Sunday during July and August where a big German picnic was held," Conover recalled. "Sometimes they had a large barbecue beef dinner—lots of cold beer too of course."

"Everything was free and the boat ride roundtrip from the foot of Walnut Street was also free."

Though plenty of cold "suds" was on hand, "I cannot remember any drunks or even rough talk as most of the crowd was females and children and

all," Conover noted.

Giving the total picture, Conover remembered "there were lots of hitch racks and places to feed the horses on the grounds at Fort Harrison for those who drove the family horse."

"Also, those who had no other transportation took the North Eighth Street Car to the end of the line at Collett Park and walked the rest of the way to the camp."

Some of the Terre Hauteans Conover remembered taking part in the summer outings included Jake Maehling, Peter Mussel, Fritz Myers, August Bader and Joe Schultz.

After the afternoon and evening's festivities the Mallard, with its 18-horse power steam engine, would load up and wheel its way back down the Wabash.

One can almost see the west-bound summer sun twinkling on the slowly rolling water as the riverboat crew batens the hatches and puts the old girl to bed.

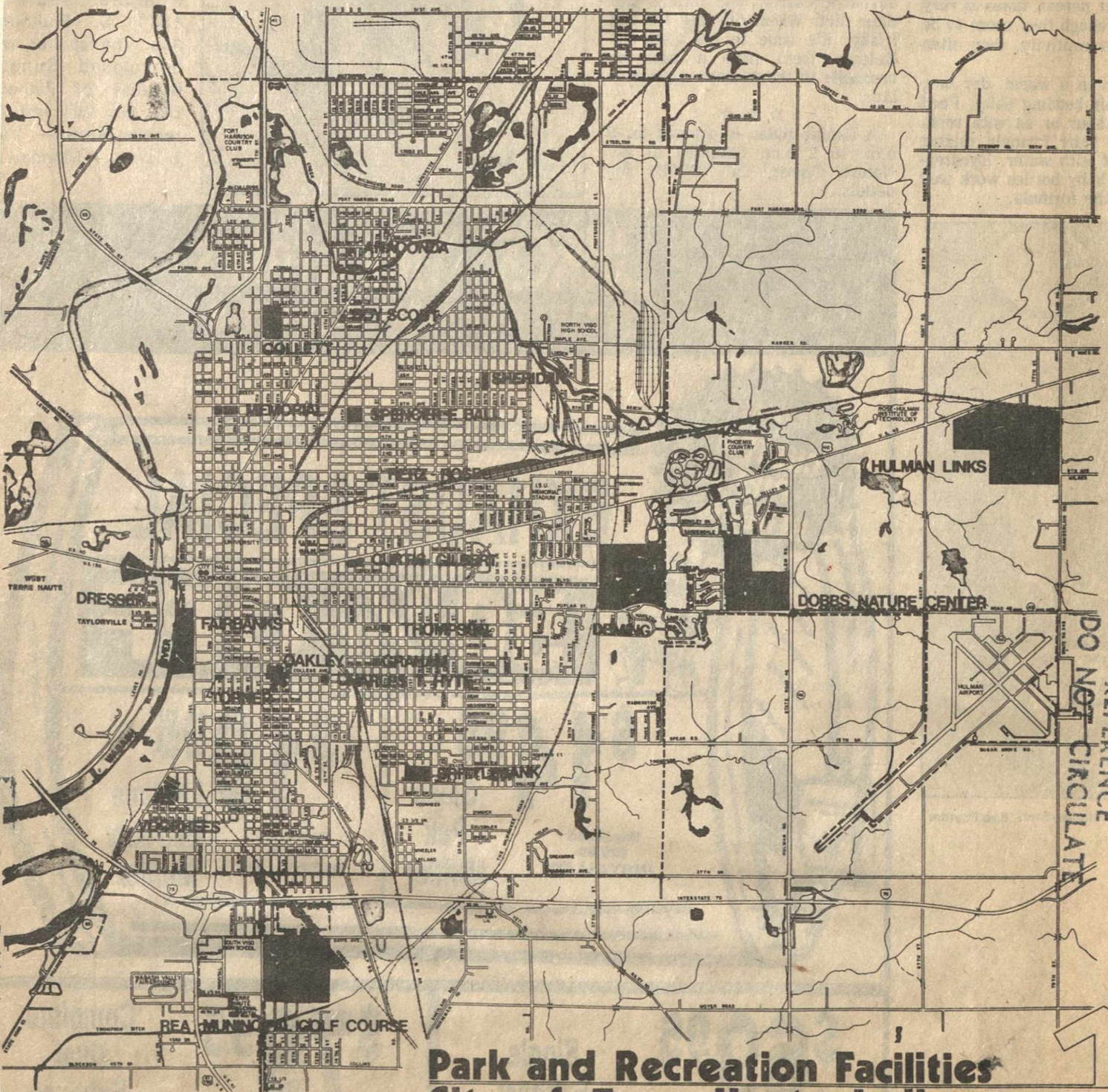


# Exploring Terre Haute's parks

Ts JUN 14 1984

Parks + Recreation (W.V.)

Community Affairs File



**Park and Recreation Facilities  
City of Terre Haute, Indiana**

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File



# NAME & LOCATION OF FACILITIES

NAME & LOCATION OF FACILITIES	TOTAL ACRES																											
		Restrooms	Shelters	Concessions	Pavilions	Clubhouses	Maintenance Bldg.	Picnic Areas	Open Play Space	Playgrounds	Water feature	Boating	Fishing	Ice Skating	Swimming Pools	Softball/Baseball	Football/Soccer	Tennis	Basketball	Horseshoe	Volleyball	Game Courts	Historic Features	Monuments	Exercise Course	Nature Trails	Archery	Winter Activities
<b>COMMUNITY PARKS</b>																												
Collett Park - 7th Street & Maple Ave.	21	●	●		●		●	●	●						●		●		●	●	●							
Deming Park - Fruitridge & Ohio Street	177	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●		●		●				●			●	●	●
Fairbanks Park - South 1st Street	145	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●									●	●	●			●	●	
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</b>																												
Brittlebank Park - 20th & Grant Streets	7		●			●	●	●							●	●	●											
Curtis Gilbert Park - 16th & Mahash	4	●				●	●	●											●	●	●							
Herz-Rose Park - 15th & Locust	5	●	●			●	●	●									●		●	●	●							
Memorial Park - 8th Ave. & 4th Street	10					●	●	●						●					●	●	●							
Sheridan Park - 28th & Beech Street	6.5	●	●			●	●	●					●	●	●		●		●	●	●							
Spencer F. Ball Park - 15th & 8th Avenue	10	●	●	●		●	●	●						●		●	●	●	●	●				●				
Thompson Park - 17th & Oak Street	5	●	●			●	●	●								●	●	●	●	●								
Voorhees Park - Voorhees & St. Rd. 63	11	●	●			●	●	●				●	●	●		●		●		●	●							
<b>BLOCK PARKS</b>																												
Anacoda - 14th & Elizabeth	.5					●		●									●											
Boy Scout - Lafayette & Barbara Avenue	.3		●				●																					
Dresser - U.S. 40 West	6																						●					
Graham - 1400 South 17th Street	1					●	●	●																				
Oakley - College & 8th Streets	.5		●			●	●	●										●	●									
<b>GOLF COURSES</b>																												
Hulman Links - Highway 40 East	230	●	●	●		●	●	●	●																			
Rea Golf Course - 0 7th & Davis Avenue	100	●	●	●		●	●	●	●							●												
<b>NATURE CENTERS</b>																												
Dobbs - Highways 42 & 46	105	●	●				●	●	●	●		●	●				●							●			●	
<b>RECREATION CENTERS</b>																												
Hyte Center - 13th & College	5	●					●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●								
Turner Girls Club - 4th & Farrington Street	1.5	●					●	●	●								●		●	●								



# Master park plan adds sites

TO DAY 1 4 1978

By J. BLAINE AKERS  
Tribune-Star Writer

**Editor's note:** The following article is the second in a series of stories concerning the current status of Terre Haute parks and plans for the future.

A long-range master plan by the Terre Haute Park and Recreation Department calls for improvements to all city parks and recreational areas.

Pat Dougherty, park superintendent, said the department intends not only improve existing facilities, but also plans to develop additional recreational sites in Highland, Terre Town and Farrington Grove neighborhoods.

"We must realize these developments and improvements cannot be made overnight, but our long-range plans are aimed at fulfilling these goals," said Dougherty.

Major improvements are expected at Deming Park, also.

According to recommendations listed in the department's master plan, the following improvements are planned:

**BOY SCOUT PARK**(Lafayette and Barbour avenues)—General landscape work including contouring and planting of additional trees, shrubs and flowers.

**COLLETT PARK**(Seventh Street and Maple Avenue)—Shelters in the park are in need of repair and new water fountains are needed near the horseshoe and tennis courts. Plans are to construct two additional horseshoe courts and a basketball court is needed. Overall park lighting needs to be improved and roads need resurfaced.

**DEMING PARK**(Fruitridge Avenue and Ohio Street)—All shelters are in need of repair. General roads need resurfaced and cinder roads west of tennis courts and west of main road need to be surfaced with asphalt. Tennis courts should be lighted for night play. The dam in the front lake needs repaired and a water fountain should be constructed near the tennis courts. Old playground equipment needs replaced, new restrooms are needed and overall lighting the park is needed.

**DOBBS MEMORIAL PARK**(Indiana 42 and 46)—Pavement of the road through the park is needed and the maintenance building at the park entrance needs to be removed. There is also a need to construct a parking lot, cut nature trails, develop arboretum and complete de-

velopment of nature center. Overall lighting of the park is needed as are repairs to the dam on the southside of the lake.

**FAIRBANKS PARK**(South Swan Street to Cruft Street along Wabash River)—Complete renovation of the outdoor stage and Chauncey Rose memorial are needed. Landscape improvements and finishing of the formal garden should be completed. Overall lighting is needed.

**GRAHAM PARK**(1400 S. 17th St.)—The addition of a new shelter with restrooms and water fountains are recommended. Also needed planting of trees, shrubs and flowers and general landscaping.

**HERZ-ROSE PARK**(15th and Locust streets)—The old storage building needs replaced with new shelter equipped with restrooms and storage area. Park needs overall lighting system, also.

**HYTE CENTER**(13th Street and College Avenue)—Recommendations include refencing tennis courts and lighting improvements for playground area.

**MEMORIAL PARK**(Eighth Avenue and Fourth Street)—Recommendations for the west section of the park include the addition of an overall lighting system and construction of a new shelter with storage and restroom facilities. Drainage problem in east section needs studied and appropriate repairs made. Backstop on softball stadium needs repaired.

**PAUL DRESSER MEMORIAL PARK**(West of Wabash River Bridge adjacent to U.S. 40)—The park serves no realistic purpose for the city and the area should be disposed of as recreational area.

**WILLIAM S. REA PARK**(Seventh Street and Davis Avenue)—Recommendations include the construction of a watering system on the golf course and renovation of clubhouse. Tennis courts need resurfaced and lighting system improved. A shelter with restrooms and concession area should be constructed adjacent to the tennis courts. Seventh Street entrance needs restructured to allow safe utilization by tennis players. Parking areas need to be paved.

**SHERIDAN PARK**(28th and Beech streets)—It is recommended a new shelter be constructed adjacent to the playground with restrooms, storage

and water fountain. New overall lighting is needed. Pool drainage system needs to be corrected to prevent flooding during backwash procedure. Curbing on all four sides of the park should be constructed. General landscaping is needed, also.

**SPENCER F. BALL PARK**(15th Street and Eighth Avenue)—Needed is complete restructuring of the site into a functional neighborhood park. Needed are shelters, development of open play spaces, an apparatus area, picnic area and two, fenced and lighted ball diamonds. Further recommendations include parking lots, restrooms, concession area, storage area and water fountains.

**GILBERT PARK**(16th Street and Wabash Avenue)—New apparatus should be installed in playground area and a new shelter should be constructed with restrooms and storage area.

**THOMPSON PARK**(17th and Oak streets)—Construction of a new shelter with restrooms and storage are needed. Water fountain needs replaced an overall lighting system improved.

**TORNER PARK**(Fourth and Farrington streets)—Overall lighting system needs improved.

**VOORHEES PARK**(Voorhees Street and Ind. 63)—Existing through roads should be removed from park and be replaced by paved entrances and parking areas near the pool and ball diamond. Two new shelters are needed and picnic square

area with grills in northeast section are recommended. New water heater should be installed at swimming pool and water fountains placed in playground area. General landscaping recommended, also.

**BRITTLEBANK PARK**(20th and Grant streets)—Needed are completion of intended development plan with entrances, parking areas, open play space, shelter with restrooms, ball diamond, basketball court and general landscape.

**HULMAN LINKS**(U.S. 40 in Lost Creek)—This site plan should be continued to include indoor tennis, pool and ice skating facilities.

**EDGEWOOD GROVE**(Adams Street, Wabash to Hudson avenues)—General landscaping needed.

**OHIO BOULEVARD**(Ohio Street, 19th Street to Fruitridge Avenue)—General landscaping needed.

**TERRE TOWN TRIANGLES**(Terre Town Subdivision)—General landscaping needed.

**HULMAN TRIANGLE**(Eighth and Hulman streets)—No recommendations.

**SIXTH STREET BOULEVARD**(Sixth Street between Helen and Maragret)—Curbs should be added to each side of this parcel and general landscaping included.

**NEIGHBORHOOD 010**—It is recommended that the park department develop neighborhood or community park sites in this area. It is also recommended Terre Town Subdivision and Highland area be given much consideration as possible site locations. This recommendation based on the fact development of additional parks in each of these areas would serve to offer an accessible, adequately sized recreation area for a portion of the city which currently lacks such.

**NEIGHBORHOOD 008**—Recreational sites should be developed in this area. A recommended site location is the Farrington Grove.

Next: Improvements to Deming Park

Wgo County Public Library

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Community Affairs File

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# State, Local Parks Growth *Parks + Recreation (Ind) + (Vigo)* Get Coverage In The Star

Since 1903, recreation has become a vital phase of our life style over the nation and here in the Wabash Valley.

The state park system was initiated in 1915 with the appointment of a State Park Commission by Governor Samuel M. Ralston. That year the commission took deeds to two tracts of land, Turkey Run and "the Cayan of McCormick's Creek".

The McCormick's Creek property was purchased jointly by the people of Owen county and the state. It now comprises 1,752 acres. Under the guidance of Col. Richard Lieber, now known as the father of the state a park system, a committee raised funds to buy the Turkey Run property. However, at the auction, the committee was outbid, and a lumber firm purchased the land for \$30,200. Later the firm sold to the committee at the same price, and in 1916, the property was presented to the state. The original tract was 238 acres, enlarged from time to time by land purchase until it is now 2,282 acres.

The effort to start Indiana's parks, the problems and the difficulties were reported in The Terre Haute Morning Star.

Subsequently, the successful efforts of the Indiana Department, American Legion to purchase The Shades, to be added to the system, was given considerable coverage by The Star. This project occurred in 1947, and added 2,970 acres to Indiana's state-owned recreation areas.

Shakamak State Park was established in 1929, and comprises 1,760 acres. The people of Sullivan, Clay and Greene counties purchased the property and presented it to the state. It is primarily a fishing area, with swimming and extensive camping facilities.

Pine Hills Nature Study Area was acquired in 1961, after a statewide campaign to raise funds was successful. Although only 594 acres, the park has unusual timber stands, has a very rugged terrain, and is one of the most natural geological areas in the state. There are hiking trails, but no camping facilities.

Cataract Lake and Richard Lieber State Park were established in 1952 upon completion of Cataract Lake reservoir by the U.S. Corps of Engineers. Another reservoir state park was established at Mansfield Reservoir in Parke County, known as Raccoon Lake State Recreation Area.

Development of the state park system and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources have been reported by The Star since 1915, and continue to receive attention of the news media as new areas are established and changes occur to enhance the areas.

City parks remained in a "limbo" status for many years

after the establishment of Deming, Collett, Thompson, Sheridan, Vorhees, Boy Scout, Memorial and a small neighborhood park or two.

Then, rather rapidly, Fairbanks Park was developed when the first city pool was built there during the administration of Mayor Ora Davis. A pool was also built at Thirteenth street and College Avenue. These closed during the depression and were never reopened. They were finally razed after the bond issue for construction was paid off during the 1960's.

Three pools were constructed in the late 1960's, in Vorhees, Deming and Sheridan parks. Brittlebank Park was built on the northside from monies received from the estate of

**Aug 29 1978**  
Joseph Brittlebank, a former resident of the city.

Rea Park golf course was built, according to the will of William S. Rea, with an attractive clubhouse. Also, during the regime of Mayor Davis, Memorial Stadium was built, designed for baseball, and later a nine-hole golf course surrounded three sides.

In 1978, after two years construction, Hulman Links was opened. This was made possible by a gift of the land and several hundred thousands of dollars from the late Tony Hulman. The championship course is recognized as one of the best in the mid-west.

As these events occurred, The Morning Star or The Star reported in full the sequence of events leading to culmination of plans.

Community Affairs File

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Vigo County Public Library



# Variety of activities offered at parks

MAY 24 1980

Park & Recreation (Vigo Co.)

Public parks in Vigo County and Terre Haute offer a variety of activities for area residents during warm weather seasons, including camping, fishing, hiking, swimming, boating, children's playgrounds, nature hikes, tennis and baseball.

The Vigo County Park and Recreation Department and the Terre Haute Park Department have announced a variety of programs for the next few months. Following is a guide to those activities.

## County Parks

The county Park and Recreation Department has various park and recreation facilities available for county residents including two county parks, a nature center, a restored schoolhouse and small neighborhood parks.

Available for summer enjoyment are Fowler Park, located south of Terre Haute on Bono Road, and Prairie Creek Park, located south of Terre Haute near Prairieton.

Fowler Park is a multi-purpose park of 140 acres that offers camping, fishing, hiking, swimming, horse trails, a creative playground, boating and a pioneer village.

A concession stand is also available by the swimming area.

For picnickers there are two shelters, plus many tables and benches.

A feature of Fowler Park is a restored log barn. The large structure is used for educational and historical purposes by clubs, school children and others.

According to information supplied by the park department, the primary emphasis for the log barn is the education of school children in Vigo County for meetings and for storage of antique horse drawn farm equipment.

The celebration of Pioneer Days is conducted at the park during the first weekend of October. Large crowds attend the festivities that include demonstrations of butchering, baking and old-fashioned crafts in the cabins.

Also highlighted are blacksmithing, an old schoolhouse and an old-fashioned country store.

Prairie Creek Park is a 100-acre multi-purpose park that ranges from gentle contours to steep slopes of forested and open fields.

Fortunately for nature lovers, only minimal destruction of wild life habitat, trees and plants was imposed on the area.

Available for park-goers are a beach and swimming area, two picnic shelters, a conservation pond, an 18-acre single purpose lake, a concrete court for tennis and basketball, a ball diamond, a creative playground and 43 camping sites.

Another feature of the county Park and Recreation Department is the Hunt's Nature Center, which is a small nature preserve used for educational purposes. School groups often take advantage of the center.

The old New Goshen School has been restored and can be used for meetings in the summer.

Small neighborhood parks are available in some rural communities which are furnished with picnic tables and small play areas.

The park department notes that all county parks and recreation areas are free of charge, except for camping and rental of the log barn which require additional monies for operation.

In addition, the Park and Recreation board recently unveiled plans for a third Vigo County park which would be located in northeastern Vigo County. The Vigo County Council is expected to consider appropriating park department nonreverting capital fund monies for the purchase and development of the proposed site when the council meets June 4.

## City Parks

The Terre Haute Park Department is gearing up to offer a variety of activities this summer.

Supervised playground programs, swimming, organized tennis and a baseball program will be among the offerings of the Park Department. Picnic facilities are available at most parks.

Swimming opens June 2 at the pools in Sheridan, Voorhees and Deming parks. Pool users will see a 25-cent increase this year. Persons from six to through 15 will pay 50 cents and persons 16 and over will need 75 cents to get into the pools.

A 10-week supervised playground program will start June 9 at Collett, Sheridan, Rose, Thompson, Voorhees and Brittlebank parks.

This year's Park Department baseball program will start June 9 at Memorial and Sheridan parks. The program usually takes place at

Spencer F. Ball Park, but that site is not available this year because it is scheduled for renovation.

Organized tennis is to be offered from June 9 through Aug. 15 at Collett and Rea parks.

New Park Superintendent Pat Ralston reported his department is working on a few special programs to add to the appeal of the local parks.

One event being considered is a June bluegrass music festival at Deming Park. Details still are being ironed out for the event, which is to be free.

Other musical events being planned include a Terre Haute Symphony concert at Deming Park and a July 13 appearance at Deming Park by the Sycamore Strummers, a banjo group.

The department also is going to help sponsor a Jesse Owens Games track meet in cooperation with Anaconda Aluminum and the Vigo County School Corp., Ralston stated.

city complexes can spend a day at Dobbs Park fishing, hiking, attending the nature center program or just relaxing.

The new superintendent has taken a strong stand in support of the police patrols aimed toward cracking down on drugs and alcohol in the city parks.

Ralston has stressed the department's desire to make the parks appealing to the whole family.

In other changes, a charge will be levied for the use of park facilities for major events such as the Banks-of-the-Wabash Festival. Ralston said a charge will cover the department's costs in gasoline and labor used in cleaning up a park during big events.

"We're not trying to stop anything," Ralston said. "We're trying to promote it, but keep our heads above water."

Ralston did point out that the policy change does not affect the previous policy used toward groups reserving shelters.

Following is a list of city facilities, their locations and some of their offerings:

- **BOY SCOUT PARK**, .32 acres at Lafayette and Barbour avenues. It primarily is an open area for free play.

- **BRITTLEBANK PARK**, 7.5 acres

Another cooperative endeavor under study is to have the Cooperative Extension Service's nutrition education program run in conjunction with playground programs, Ralston said. The program reportedly is educational only and does not provide food.

Also being planned is a program where senior citizens from certain

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Vigo County Public Library



at 20th and Grant streets. Items available here include tennis courts, a timberform playground, a shelter area, a softball diamond and a supervised playground program.

- **COLLETT PARK**, 21.1 acres at Seventh Street and Maple Avenue. Offerings include two shelters, a pavilion, tennis court, AAU-sanctioned horseshoe courts, timberform playground, open space, jogging, a supervised playground program, and a tennis program.

- **DEMING PARK**, 160 acres at Fruitridge Avenue and Poplar Street. Available here are a swimming pool, an exercise course, a creative playground, a kiddieland, two fishing lakes, a concession, a train for children (hopefully it will be running this summer), several shelters, hiking, a softball diamond and tennis courts.

- **DOBBS MEMORIAL GROVE**, 105 acres on east Poplar Street. Among the features here are a nature center for educational programs, a lake for public fishing, hiking trails, a small stand of virgin timber, restrooms, and the main maintenance area for the park department. This site has been dedicated as a state nature preserve.

- **FAIRBANKS PARK AND DRESSER DRIVE**, located along the Wabash River next to First Street. Features here include a sunken garden with a fountain, the Chauncey Rose Memorial, boat launch facilities, and an amphitheater. Ralston reported this is a good park for sunbathers and picnic outings.

- **GRAHAM PARK**, 1 acre at 1401 S. 14 17th St. Playground equipment is available at this neighborhood site.

- **HERZ-ROSE PARK**, 5.18 acres at 1515 Locust St. This site has basketball facilities, playground equipment and horseshoe courts. A new restroom-shelter complex also is under construction.

- **HULMAN LINKS**, 230 acres at U.S. Highway 40 and Chamberlin Road. Golf is the game played at this facility. Plans call for installation of cart paths and of water in the maintenance building. Restrooms reportedly are available.

- **HYTE CENTER**, five acres at 1101 S. 13th St. This facility offers a variety of community programs. Also available are a timberform playground, basketball courts and tennis

- **MEMORIAL PARK**, 9.7 acres bounded by Third Street, Seventh Avenue, Sixth Street and Eighth Avenue. Assorted playground equipment and a lighted softball diamond used for league games are available. The site also will house a baseball program. A shelter-restroom complex is under construction.

- **PAUL DRESSER MEMORIAL**, six acres on U.S. Highway 40 west of the Wabash River Bridge. This is only an open area with no plans for further development because of heavy traffic.

- **REA PARK GOLF COURSE**, 160 acres located at Seventh Street and Davis Avenue. Golf is the main sport offered at this site, where the clubhouse was remodelled during the winter. Also at the park are tennis courts, which will be used in an organized tennis program.

- **SHERIDAN PARK**, 6.5 acres at 2825 Buckeye St. Facilities here include a swimming pool, a softball diamond, and assorted playground equipment. A supervised playground program is planned along with a baseball program and a shelter-restroom complex is under construction.

- **SPENCER F. BALL PARK**, 9.8 acres at 14th Street and Eighth Avenue. This site usually has a baseball program, but it has been transferred to Memorial and Sheridan parks.

- **GILBERT PARK**, 3.8 acres at 1431 Wabash Ave. This site possesses assorted playground equipment and lights.

- **THOMPSON PARK**, 4.7 acres at 1721 Oak St. A shelter-restroom complex is under construction here. Playground equipment already is on site, and a summer recreation program is scheduled.

- **TORNER HOUSE**, 1.3 acres at 1107 S. Fourth St. This Park Department property is leased to the Girls' Club, which offers a variety of programs.

- **VOORHEES PARK**, 17.4 acres at 230 Voorhees St. A pool, shelter and a baseball diamond are offered at this site. A restroom-shelter house complex is under construction.

- **ANACONDA PARK**, located at 14th Street and Elizabeth Avenue. This is Terre Haute's newest park and it provides playground equip-



# Numerous city parks maintained by park, recreation department

The Terre Haute Park and Recreation Department maintains more than a dozen public parks around the city. The facilities at the parks are varied and are designed to meet most recreational needs.

The parks include:

- Boy Scout Park, Lafayette and Barbour Avenue;
- Brittlebank Park, 20th and Grant;
- Collett Park, Seventh and Maple Avenue;
- Deming Park, Fruitridge and Ohio;
- Dobbs Memorial Park, East Poplar Street;
- Fairbanks Park, Dresser Drive;
- Graham Park, 1401 S. 17th St.;
- Herz-Rose Park, 1515 Locust St.;
- Sheridan Park, 2825 Buckeye St.;
- Spencer F. Ball Park, 14th and Seventh Avenue;
- Gilbert Park, 1431 Wabash Ave.;
- Thompson Park, 1721 Oak

St.;

- Voorhees Park, 230 Voorhees St.; and

- Anaconda Park, 14th and Elizabeth streets.

The Park and Recreation Department also operates two golf courses — Hulman Links, U.S. 40 and Chamberlin Road, and

Rea Park, Seventh and Davis Avenue.

The department also maintains a nature center staffed by naturalists at Dobbs Memorial Park.

In all, the Park and Recreation Department is responsible for more than 950 acres of park land.



Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

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# Feature Department



Parks & Recreation  
Community Affairs File (UC)

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## Vigo County Park and Recreation Department

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Vigo County was created by the Indiana State Legislature on January 21, 1818 and was named for Francis Vigo, a Spanish merchant who on January 29, 1779 helped defeat the British south of the Great Lakes by supplying George Rogers Clark's ill-supplied army of 200 men all the food, clothing, and ammunition to defeat the British at Fort Sackville in Vincennes.

Vigo County and the Wabash River soon became a focal point for commerce and travel in western Indiana. The rivers were channels for the trade that stimulated business and built the foundation for growth that was cemented by the Old National Road, now U.S. 40, making Terre Haute and Vigo County the "Gateway to the West."

Vigo County is in recreational rich west-central Indiana on the Illinois border and is home for 112,385 people. The county has four incorporated areas: the City of Terre Haute and the towns of West Terre Haute, Seelyville and Riley. Four institutions of higher learning are located in Vigo County: Indiana State University, Rose-Hulman Institute, St. Mary-of-the-Woods and Indiana Technical Vocational College.

The Vigo County Park Department was established on December 13, 1965 by Circuit Judge H. Ralph Johnston. This marked the second county park department in the state established under the Indiana Park and Recreation Law of 1965. The department's first Master Plan was completed in 1966 and called for four major "water based" multipurpose parks to be established in Vigo County. Each park to be developed was to have similar outdoor facilities; less than those found in larger district and state parks but more than in smaller urban parks. Since that first plan, the addition of natural areas, historical sites, special recreational and educational facilities, rural neighborhood parks and new sub-division park planning have been added to the new park plan.

### PARK DEVELOPMENT

The construction of parks and recreation areas in Vigo County began in 1967 with the gift of 140 acres of property from Pea-

body Coal Company. This property was given the name of Fowler Park after Captain Eugene Fowler, the first Vietnam war casualty from Vigo County. Fowler Park is the most popular county park with area residents. It offers a wide variety of facilities that include modern and primitive camping, swimming, trails for hiking and horse riding, a creative playground, picnic shelters, picnic areas, log Pioneer Village, Indiana's oldest covered bridge, boating, and some of the best fishing in the county.

ment testing program, developed all the trails, an access road, a major cut for a boat ramp, and a mile-long moat that prevents off-road vehicle access to this area.

This gift to the people of Vigo County was worth \$35,000.00. Recently, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources constructed a \$10,000.00 concrete boat ramp to the largest lake, providing fishermen and campers easy access to the lake. Although no buildings will be built on this property, a large parking area was con-



*The Fowler Park pioneer settlement is surrounded by a rail fence horse high, pig tight, and bull strong!*

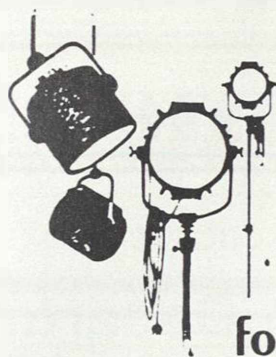
In 1982, the Peabody Coal Company donated 300 additional acres across the road from Fowler Park. This new area, called Fowler Park Wilderness Area, was strip mined in the early 1950's but has been completely reforested except for eight different lakes which offer excellent fishing. The largest lake is 18.6 acres and has been stocked with bass, crappie, bluegill, and red eared sunfish.

Over five miles of trails have been built that offer hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and access to back-pack camping. Thanks to J I Case Company very little county funds were used to develop this area. J I Case, using backhoes and front end loaders in an experimental equip-

ment testing program, developed all the trails, an access road, a major cut for a boat ramp, and a mile-long moat that prevents off-road vehicle access to this area.

In 1972, the Vigo County Park Board purchased 100 acres in Prairie Creek Township and called this area Prairie Creek Park. This property was developed into a very beautiful park offering modern camping, hiking trails, a creative playground, picnic shelters and grounds, modern restrooms and showers, playfield, tennis courts, swimming, fishing in two lakes, a nature area and a log sugar maple syrup evaporator building. This park is adjacent to a Public Law 566 flood control lake and surrounded by a beautiful grove of old growth sugar maples that are tapped each February and March for the making of maple





# SPOTLIGHT

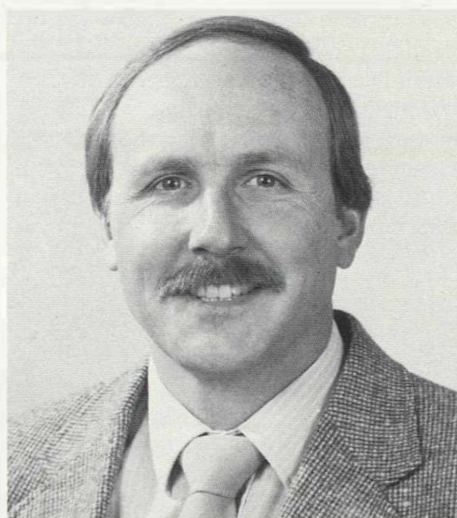
## FOCUS ON ONE OF INDIANA'S LEADING PARK AND RECREATION PERSONALITIES

The subject of this issue's spotlight is Gerald J. Pagac.

Jerry has served as Director of the Division of Outdoor Recreation in the Indiana Department of Natural Resources since 1977. The Division of Outdoor Recreation is responsible for the administration of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grants program; the preparation of the Indiana State Outdoor Recreation Plan; the implementation of the Indiana Natural, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System; development of long distance bicycling, hiking and snowmobile trails; and execution of environmental impact reviews for the Department.

He first joined the Department of Natural Resources in 1972 as a research technician in the Planning Section of the Division of Outdoor Recreation. In 1974, Jerry was appointed the State Streams and Trails Specialist, which was the first position of this kind for the Department of Natural Resources. In this capacity he developed the State Natural, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System program, under which five river segments have been protected, and produced the *Indiana Canoe Guide*. He also initiated the long distance trails program, which now includes the Hoosier Bikeway System connecting different state parks and recreation areas; backpacking and hiking trails including the 33 mile Adventure and 60 mile Knobstone Trails in southern Indiana; and snowmobile trails in four northern counties. The *Indiana Hiking Guide* has also been published by the Division's Streams and Trails Section, which now numbers three full-time staff. In 1976 he received the Garret Eppley Scholarship Award from Indiana University for his outstanding achievement in developing the state trails and streams programs.

As Director of the Division of Outdoor Recreation, Jerry supervises nine profes-



GERALD J. PAGAC

sional and three clerical full-time staff in addition to summer staff. The Division undertakes land acquisition and facility construction throughout the state for the streams and trails programs, in addition to environmental impact statement review coordination, special studies, and master planning for statewide outdoor recreation needs. It also is the Administrator of federal grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund program, which are shared between the Department of Natural Resources and local city and county park and recreation boards throughout the State. The Division's budget has ranged as high as \$18 million in a given year. Jerry is also highly involved in working with the State's Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission and the White River Park Development Commission as a DNR representative.

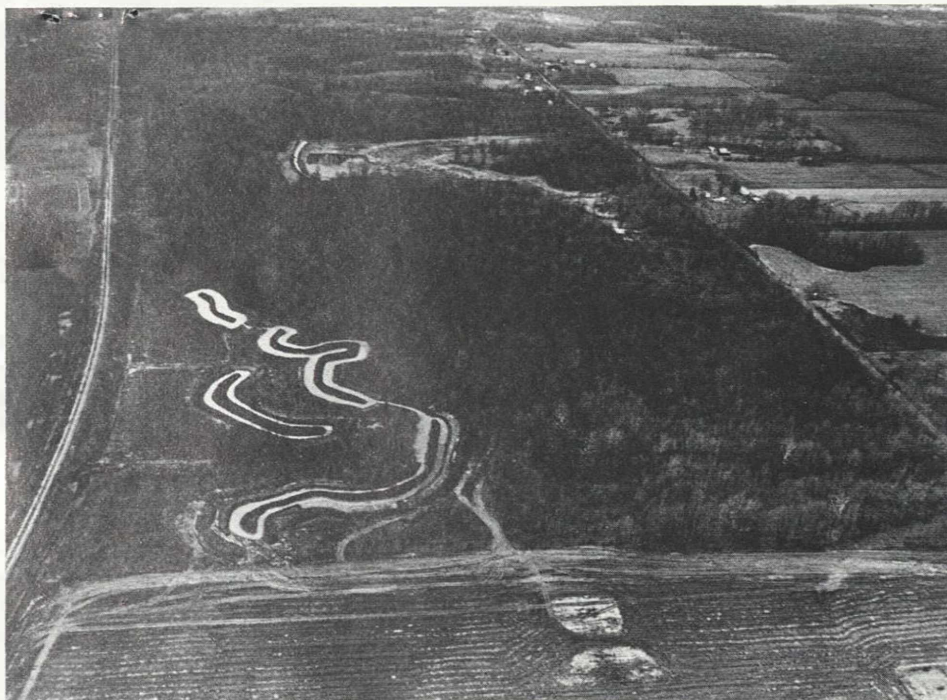
Jerry is a native of Wisconsin and graduated from Whitewater State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in geography. He also received a Master of Science degree in Park and Recreation Management from the University of Oregon. He was employed as a county planner with the Waukesha County (Wisconsin) Park and

Planning Department and served with the U.S. Army in Korea prior to coming to Indiana.

An active member of the National Recreation and Park Association, Jerry currently serves as a member of the National Society for Park Resources Board of Directors. He also serves on the Indiana Park and Recreation Association Board of Directors, has served on the Nominating and Personnel Committees and been Chairman of the Legislative Committee. His leadership in legislative efforts resulted in positive changes in the Indiana Park and Recreation Law for local units of government when the law was recodified by the 1981 General Assembly. In 1981 he received an Outstanding Service Award from IPRA and a special Citation from NRPA for his work with the State legislature on the park law. The Division of Outdoor Recreation staff received Certificates of Recognition from the Association in 1981. Jerry also serves on the Board of Directors of Indiana Outdoor Education Inc., which conducts the Indiana Wilderness Challenge program for youth.

Jerry is a sports enthusiast, participating on DNR office softball, basketball and golf teams. A college track and field team member, he placed second in the javelin competition in the 1983 White River Park State Games. He resides with his wife, Mardee, and their two children Brook, 7, and Zachary, 5, in Pittsboro. Jerry and Mardee have remodeled their country home and small farm and reside with a collection of ducks, chickens, geese, cats, dogs, goats, bees and a horse. Creative homesteaders, their farm produces a variety of vegetables as well as their own eggs, milk, honey and maple syrup. An active church member, he is serving his second year as President of the Circle Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship.





*J I Case Wetland Wildlife Area*

syrup.

The third, and probably the last major park development in Vigo County is the new 232 acre Hawthorn Park presently under construction. This park should be totally completed by the spring of 1985 and will offer 81 modern campsites, modern restroom and shower buildings, 3 picnic shelters, 3 creative play areas, a play field for softball and soccer, 5 miles of trails, a creative play apparatus at water's edge for swimmers, an 18 acre and a 61 acre lake for fishing, and a wetland wildlife and observation area.

Of all the facilities at Hawthorn Park the wetland area, now called the J I Case Wetland Wildlife Area, is unique. In 1980 when the Hawthorn Park property was purchased, the eastern third of the property normally stayed wet and did not have much recreational potential. In 1981 when the local J I Case officials approached us about using the park area to test their new 680 backhoe, the county agent, who is also a park board member, suggested we make the area wetter. Since then, the J I Case people have dug 5 acres of long narrow pits for fish, mammal, and migratory bird habitats. In 1982, a flood control permit was issued by the Division of Fish and Wildlife for the construction of a levy to develop a 51 acre lake around the pits. At present, this levy is scheduled to be nearly completed by October of 1984. With the excellent help of the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, this should develop into a great fishing area, wildlife area and education study area for schools. The monetary value of the work accomplished by J I Case Company was approximately \$225,000.00.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

The Vigo County Park Department does not have planned recreational programs due to the expense and development of three major park facilities. However, in the process of developing two of these facilities, three special events have evolved that have attracted thousands of people. These events are unusual for a county park system.

The first of these special events came about when a local family donated an au-

thorical and recreational benefits for area schools and children.

Each fall the log settlement comes alive when the annual Pioneer Days festival brings to life our pioneer heritage. Volunteers in period costumes welcome visitors and demonstrate pioneer work skills such as dyeing, cooking, spinning, quilting, log hewing, sorghum making, rail splitting, shingle making, basket making, caning, muzzle loading, blacksmithing and much more. Visitors can also view a 23 minute pioneer film, visit a large trader's market and chow down on some good vittles.

In December, one weekend is scheduled for the annual pioneer Christmas walk. This event is a candlelight tour depicting what Christmas was like in Indiana in the 1860's.

A third event is the making of maple syrup at Prairie Creek Park. This came about because of an unusual grove of sugar maple trees in the park and the gift of a log house that serves as an evaporator house. Each February and March approximately 2,000 school children, as well as many other visitors, observe the making of maple syrup.

Every successful park and recreation department is the result of the efforts of hard work from good people. The success of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department has come from dedicated Park Board members, park department staff, volunteers, excellent cooperation from the state and local agencies, and most importantly, vocal and financial support of the tax payers. With all this backing, the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department is sure to continue to meet the recreational needs



*Children taste "sweet" maple syrup at the Prairie Creek Sugar Cabin*

thentic log house to the park department. Out of their one gift the park department made plans to develop a pioneer settlement. At present, eight authentic log buildings have been restored at the Fowler Park entrance. Over a period of ten years the log settlement has given educational, his-

of the people of Vigo County.

*This article was prepared by Keith Ruble, Superintendent of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department.*



Parks, (TH)

LOCATION & ACREAGE OF PARKS  
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA - 1963

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
<u>Boulevards:</u>		
Edgewood Grove	Adams St. - Wabash to Hudson.....	2
Six Triangles	Edgewood Grove Area.....	1
Ohio	19th Street - Fruitridge Ave.....	46.1
Five Triangles, Terre Town	Terre Town - 25th & Lafayette Ave...	2
One Triangle	8th and Hulman Street.....	.05
Sixth Street	Helen to Margaret Avenue.....	5
<u>Boy Scout Park</u>	Lafayette & Barbour Avenue.....	.32
<u>Collett Park</u> 290,000	7th and Maple Avenue.....	21.1
<u>Deming Park</u> 351,650	Fruitridge & Ohio Boulevard.....	160
<u>Dobbs Memorial Grove</u>	R.R.#5, Box 538, Terre Haute.....	105
<u>Fairbanks Park and Dresser Drive</u> 200,000	South 1st St. - Swan to Cruft.....	38
	" " " " " " .....	103.81
<u>Graham Park</u>	1401 South 17th Street.....	.96
<u>Herz-Rose Park</u> 91,000	1515 Locust Street.....	5.18
<u>Hyte Center</u>	13½ - 14th and Deming Street.....	5
<u>Memorial Park</u> 50,000	3d - 6th-Between 7th & 8th Avenues..	9.77
<u>Nurses Park</u>	6-6½ St., North of 8th Avenue.....	1.92
<u>Paul Dresser Memorial</u>	U.S. #40, West of River Bridge.....	6
<u>Rea Park Golf Course</u> 200,000	7th & Davis Avenue.....	160
<u>Rea Park Residence</u> 60,000	1115 Davis Ave.(On Golf Course Grounds)	
<u>Sheridan Park</u>	2825 Buckeye Street.....	6.5
<u>Spencer F. Ball Field</u>	14-15th St. - 7th to 8th Ave.....	9.86
<u>Memorial Stadium</u>	Brown & Wabash Avenue.....	17.1
<u>Stadium Golf Course</u> 728,000	3100 Wabash Avenue.....	34.2
<u>Steeg Park</u> 60,000	1431 Wabash Avenue.....	3.85
<u>Thompson Park</u> 20,000	1721 Oak Street.....	4.73
<u>Torner House Girls' Club</u> 25,500	1107 South 4th Street.....	1.34
<u>Voorhees Park</u> 49,900	230 West Voorhees Street.....	17.40
<u>Washington (Booker T.)</u>	1101 South 13th Street.....	4.
Total Acreage.....		770.93

all other 325,000  
groups 40,000  
Dobbs 200,000  
Total 2,691,650

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE  
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# REFERENCE DO NOT CIRCULATE

## LOCATION &amp; ACREAGE OF PARKS

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Vigo County Public Library

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
<u>Boulevards:</u>		
Edgewood Grove	Adams St. - Wabash to Hudson	2
Six Triangles	Edgewood Grove Area	1
Ohio	19th Street - Fruitridge Ave.	46.1
Five Triangles, Terre Town	Terre Town - 25th & Lafayette Ave.	2
One Triangle	8th and Hulman Street	.05
Sixth Street	Helen to Margaret Avenue	5
<u>Boy Scout Park</u>	Lafayette & Barbour Avenue	56.16
<u>Collett Park</u>	7th and Maple Avenue	21.1
<u>Deming Park</u>	Fruitridge & Ohio Boulevard	160
<u>Dobbs Memorial Grove</u>	R.R. 31 - Box 520, Terre Haute	105
<u>Fairbanks Park and Dresser Drive</u>	South 1st St. - Swan to Cruft	38
	" " " " " "	107.81
<u>Graham Park</u>	1401 South 17th Street	745.31
		.96
<u>Herz-Rose Park</u>	1515 Locust Street	5.18
<u>Hyte Center</u>	13 1/2 - 14th and Deming Street	5
<u>Memorial Park</u>	3d - 6th-Between 7th & 8th Avenues	9.77
<u>Paul Dresser Memorial</u>	U.S. \$40, West of River Bridge	6
<u>Rea Park Golf Course</u>	7th and Davis Avenue	160
<u>Rea Park Residence</u>	1115 Davis Ave. (On Golf Course Grounds)	
<u>Sheridan Park</u>	2825 Buckeye Street	6.5
<u>Spencer F. Ball Field</u>	14-15th St. - 7th to 8th Avenue	9.86
<u>Curtis Gilbert Park (Formerly Steeg Park)</u>	1431 Wabash Avenue	3.85
<u>Thompson Park</u>	1721 Oak Street	4.73
<u>Turner House Girls' Club</u>	1107 South 4th Street	1.34
<u>Voorhees Park</u>	230 West Voorhees Street	17.40
<u>Washington Booker T.</u>	1101 South 13th Street	4

Total Acreage.....

721.71



## LOCATION &amp; ACREAGE OF PARKS

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
<u>Boulevards:</u>		
Edgewood Grove	Adams St. - Wabash to Hudson	2
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<u>Dobbs Memorial Grove</u>	R.R. 31 - Box 520, Terre Haute	105
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<u>Graham Park</u>	1401 South 17th Street	.96
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<u>Washington Booker T.</u>	1101 South 13th Street	4

Total Acreage.....

721.71



Parks & Recreation - History

# Wabash Valley Express floats down the river...

Parks & Recreation (VC) 6-13-89

Community Affairs File

Madisonville Gazette

by Tammie Edington

The Wabash Express is not roaring down the track, but floating down the river.

A journey down the Wabash River on a route lined with historic landmarks of the Wabash Valley, is now available, planned and engineered by Jerry Bodeaux.

Bodeaux, special projects director at WTHI Radio-TV, desired to promote the community and the Fairbanks Park area, which has received recent renovations.

"I was so impressed with what the city administration has done at Fairbanks Park, that I wanted people to see the area," said Bodeaux.

Bodeaux and his son Kevin, who also works at WTHI, meets those interested in the excursion at Fairbanks Park, transports them by bus to Clinton, where the trip begins. The rafters are entirely on their own to picnic, sunbathe or float at their own pace back to Fairbanks Park.

The rafts, said Bodeaux, are designed to be used on mild white water and are 12 feet long and 6 feet wide.

A map provided indicates 14 significant historic points along the route, which Bodeaux has researched.

Among them are Salt Creek - burial site of two soldiers killed in the Battle of Fort Harrison; Pearls in the Wabash - site of Indiana's famous pearl fishing; Train Wreck - site of a train wreck which

occurred in 1892 on the Big Four Bridge. The engines are still in the water.

The river, according to Bodeaux, is clean, although it has been thought by many not to be.

"It just has the natural barriers that any river has in it," he said.

The trip is approximately 16-18 miles and it is suggested six to nine hours should be allowed for the excursion.

The city administration, according to Bodeaux was pleased with his idea and encouraged him to pursue it.

He also contacted the Natural Resources/Field and Streams Department in Indianapolis and they were also positive about the venture.

"They said the waterways belonged to the people and they wanted them to be more aware of them," said Bodeaux.

The rates are \$20 for a 4-Man raft and \$15 for a 2-Man raft.

"I also provide life cushions for \$1 per day each, but many people bring their own," he said.

The trips are available daily, departures times at 8 and 10 a.m. through Labor Day. Weekends only during April, September and October.

Group rates, special date and times are available. Reservations are recommended. For a day on the Wabash write: The Wabash Express River Float, Box 1783, Terre Haute, Indiana 47808 or call 466-6150.

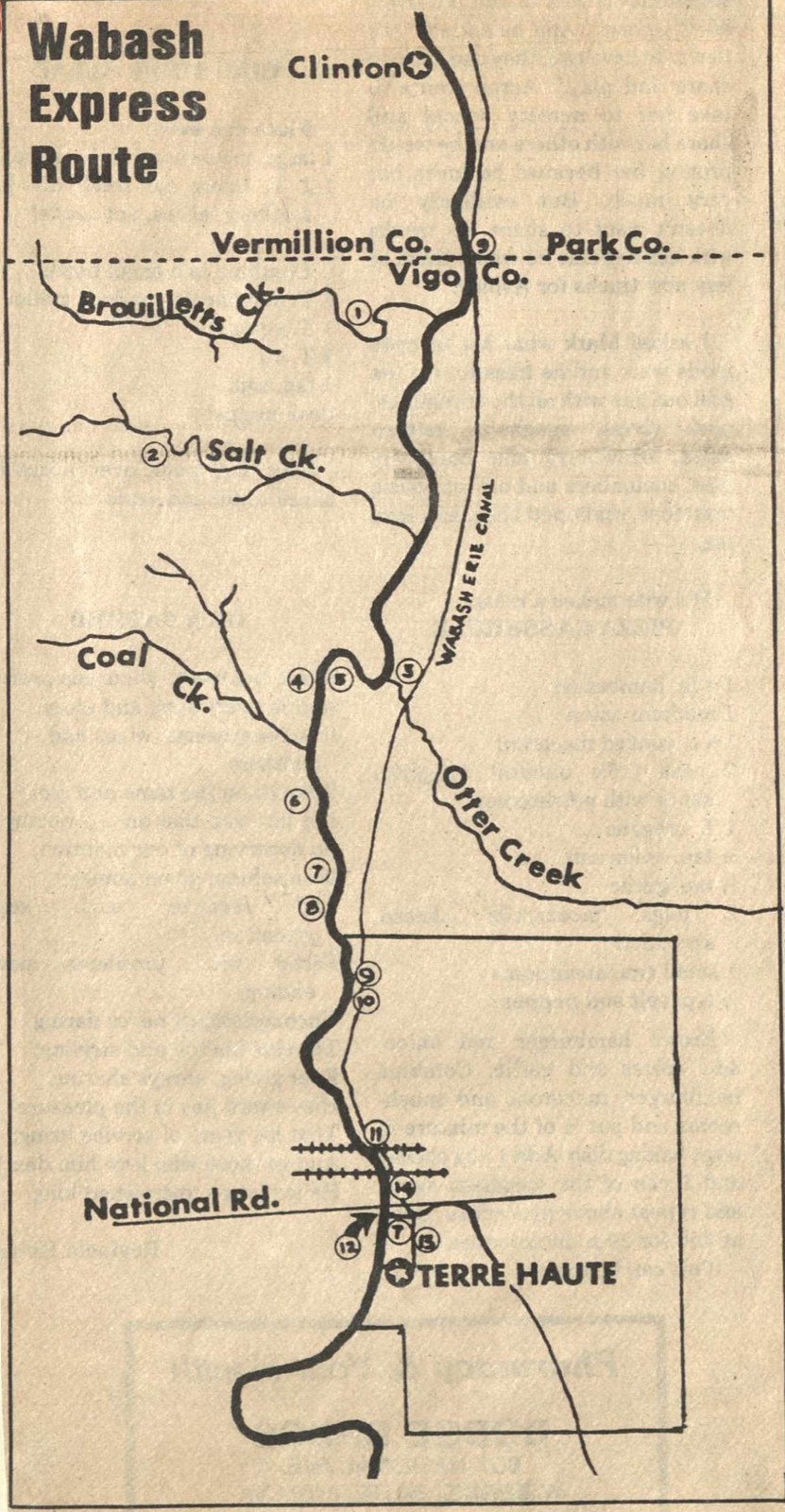
Vigo County Public Library

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Community Affairs File



# Wabash Express Route





Parks + Recreation (V.C.)

SPC

Community Affairs File

TERRE HAUTE PARKS

Dr. Spann

History 463

by

Karen Leigh Neeley

May 5, 1971



#### FOREWARD

The sources cited in this paper are located in the Cunningham Library under the file title "Terre Haute Parks." If the citations seem inadequate or incomplete, this is a result of my using various clippings and scrapbooks which did not have complete dates. A bibliography is omitted due to the fact that all of the sources are located in this file, with the exception of the Glaab and Brown book. All newspaper articles are either taken from the Terre Haute Tribune or the Terre Haute Star, unless otherwise stated. For these shortcomings, I apologize.



On the national level, the park and boulevard movement began in the 1870's. Efforts, however, to introduce trees and parks into the city was a well-organized movement in the 1840's and 1850's.<sup>1</sup> While this seems to be a 19th century affair on the national level, Terre Haute's initial reaction to this movement did not gain momentum until the early 1900's. Essentially, Terre Haute's park movement is a 20th century phenomenon.

Although the primary concern of this paper is to trace the development of Terre Haute's major parks, their origins, objectives and promoters, one can associate these objectives with the objectives often cited as the purposes of the national park movement.

Basically, there were three important objectives in establishing Terre Haute parks. First, parks were viewed as a health measure; second, parks provided socially wholesome areas of recreation for children; and, equally important, parks preserved nature. These considerations would accomplish what Olmsted stated as the preservation of the "health of the body social."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Charles Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, A History of Urban America, (London: Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 70.

2. Ibid., p. 255.



Sources indicate three especially enthusiastic periods during which park improvements and formations took place: the first decade of the 20th century, the late 1930's and early '40's, and the 1960's. The first period was the creation of the park and boulevard system. The remaining two periods were periods of re-vitalization of the park system.

Terre Haute received its first tract of land for park purposes in 1883 from Mr. Josephus Collett, who offered the city twenty acres, commonly known as Barbour's Woods, to be used specifically as a public park. Collett "wished to give the city a place where all might go for recreation and pleasure; and, this land was easily accessible to the city, and well adapted for a park...he had decided to give the land with no condition save one--that it be used as a public park as long as the city retained possession of it. He would rely on the council and its successors to beautify and adorn the park so that it would be a source of pride and admiration to the city."<sup>3</sup>

In acceptance of this gift the council made the following statement: "To its schools, churches, colleges, hospitals, orphan home, is now added the long-needed

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3. Terre Haute newspaper.



public park."<sup>4</sup> The inclusion of the park within this grouping of establishments indicates its socially important position as a place for guidance, self-improvement and social interaction.

The acquisition of more parks did not take place until 1907 when a movement was instigated by the Civic League in the form of the circulation of a petition for the purchase of the Riverside Park site.<sup>5</sup> Previous to this, citizens had met informally on March 25, 1907 with Mayor Lyons and discussed the matter of constructing a park "on the east banks of the Wabash River south of the bridge."<sup>6</sup> Citizens who supported the Riverside park were: Spencer Ball, M. C. Rankin, Henry Newkom, William W. Adamson, and George W. Faris. No immediate action was taken to establish the park due to many objections.

The following newspaper excerpt not only justifies the Riverside park, but also suggests some of the objections:

"The very fact that the riverfront of the city now has a dilapidated, ragged appearance, that the west end of the city and the western entrance to it are unworthy of a

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4. Ibid.

5. Terre Haute Star, March 30, 1907.

6. Terre Haute Star, March 26, 1907.



handsome, progressive city, is a very good reason for some striking improvement like a fine park.

"Many may be so accustomed to the slatternly and run-down appearance of Miss Terre Haute as viewed from the west side, as not to be concerned about it, or able to conceive of any improvement...Those who object to the surroundings of the park and oppose it on that account, are not familiar with the park movement in many cities, in which parks are being established in districts that are most thoroughly objectionable and because they are.

"...For some reason unknown to the board of works the Germans of the city oppose the riverside park. A remonstrance was received...representing a membership of 70 in that organization remonstrating against the purchase of the proposed site. No action was taken on the petition. The only formal remonstrances that have been received so far have come from the German residents."7

In 1907 Spencer Ball wrote a letter to the editor of the Terre Haute Star, listing five reasons why the park should be established and rejecting three objections: "It (the land) can never again not even in 3 months, be acquired as cheaply as now... only available water frontage left within the city limits...It is central and with the certa-in growth of the city westward will become more so...contains a valuable artesian well of highly medicinal water.... To make a nasty dumping ground of our waterfront would

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7. Terre Haute Star, 1907.



be to shamefully ignore one of our greatest natural assets."<sup>8</sup> Ball stated that the smoke in the area would soon be abated and that the railroad tracks would be shut off with a wall. He also said that the toughness of the locality was all the more reason to redeem it.

Besides the arguments thus presented, there was widespread interest in improving the area because of the financial improvements in the area; such as, the new bridge, courthouse, and jail.

Gardener Simonds<sup>d</sup> offered to plan Terre Haute's park system for \$200. He had a national reputation for landscaping and had been the assistant of Chief Burnham who had planned the grounds for the Chicago and St. Louis fairs and had made San Francisco's park system famous. Simonds' ideas about the riverside park were altogether different from what the city wanted. He opposed the spending of money on buildings for show and on a sea wall. He preferred to leave the park site as nearly in the way that nature intended. He considered the historic Wabash as the central figure in his scheme, and wanted to

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8. Terre Haute Star, 1907.



afford an unrestricted view of the river.<sup>9</sup> An article in the Terre Haute Star, on February 6, 1907, stated that "In his (Simonds) sketch he has taken from the shores of the Wabash the piles of ashes and rubbish." In the same newspaper article, the author considered parks as "breathing spots and resting places for the toiling thousands."

Not only were people petitioning for a riverside park, but, at this same time, the Sons of the American Revolution adopted a resolution urging the purchase of the Ft. Harrison site. Simonds considered this site also in his plans for a comprehensive system.

It was not until 1908 that a comprehensive park and boulevard system for Terre Haute was presented to the city Council. The report represented support from the Civic League, Young Business Men's Club, Commercial Club, Manufacturers' Club, Retail Merchants Association, Motor Boat Club, German Alliance, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the city at large. One member from each of these organizations and two from the city at large comprised the subcommittee. Their report was submitted on April 11, 1908.

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9. Terre Haute Star, 1907.



This committee proposed that the city acquire the lands and sites through the process of legal condemnation. Finances for their purchase would be through the issuance of bonds in amounts sufficient to buy the lands with a margin for at least partial improvement. They also suggested that the next year and thereafter the tax levy for park purposes be increased in order to redeem the bonds and provide a fund for the purchase and improvement of parks and boulevards.<sup>10</sup>

As of September, 1913, there was still much discussion as to the location of the Riverside park. The following excerpt, from a letter written by Spencer Ball to the President and members of the Board of Park Commissioners of the city, portrays the public sentiment at this time: "...The site of Taylorville is admitted to be unfit for a town. Used as such a great wrong is done its unfortunate inhabitants, and a serious and increasing menace and expense put upon Terre Haute. But it can be feasibly converted into park and playground. No expert will question that. Such use of the river front and the adjacent land will benefit everybody. Ugliness would be displaced by beauty; a disease breeding place by a public health-giving place. The disgrace of

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10. A report submitted to the City Council on April 11, 1908 by the Civic League and various groups.



disfiguring both banks of the noble Wabash right down in the heart of the city and at the west approach of our splendid bridge, would be wiped out."<sup>11</sup>

Observation today tells us that Ball lost the argument and that Simonds' ideas as to the naturalness of the park gave way to public whims and buildings for show.

By 1909--at the time of the first annual report of the Dept. of Public Parks--Terre Haute had several parks; among these were Collett, City, Voorhees, Thompson, Rose, Memorial, and the Old Indian Cemetary. The beginnings of a fine park system were underway.

By the 1930's Terre Haute had much public attention and praise for her park development. Natural beauty in the parks seemed to be the dominant theme. Norton Hayman, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, stated that tourists were "immediately attracted to the natural beauty of Terre Haute's loveliest park, Deming."<sup>12</sup> The "Flora of Indiana Is Perpetuated In Terre Haute Park" was the title of an article written in the Christian Science Monitor on October 18, 1935. William Alumbaugh

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11. Letter written to the President and Members of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Terre Haute, Indiana by Spencer F. Ball on Sept. 8, 1913.

12. Terre Haute Star, June 27, 1937.



revealed the usefulness of Deming: "Due to the large varieties of trees, shrubs, flowers and wild flowers, this park is used as a study center for nature and botany by the Nature Study club and high school students. The entrance of Deming park contains one of the most complete and largest iris gardens in the world."<sup>13</sup> Alumbaugh also stated that Collett park was being used as a botanical center at this time.

The purpose of Deming is expressed in the following quote: "An arboretum, in which every native Indiana tree, fern, shrub and flower will grow, is being planted in Deming Park here. This, is not only to beautify the hills of the park itself but to give the children of the Wabash Valley an opportunity to know and appreciate the native plants of their state."<sup>14</sup> The Izaak Walton League was in charge of the planting and of erecting five large rearing ponds for fish.

Anna Bowles Wiley's writings reflect the pride of the citizens in their parks and of the importance of supervised recreation for children: "...No city has a better system. There is not a day which sees the parks emptied of children. They gather to play and learn new

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13. Terre Haute Star, June 27, 1937.

14. Christian Science Monitor, October 18, 1935.



games, learn new things to do, for there are trained men and women in all where there is playground equipment."<sup>15</sup> The park department furnished the equipment, and the supplies. The W. P. A. furnished the women and men instructors and supervisors.

It had been the desire of the park board members to preserve Deming as a natural habitat but, due to persistent demands by the public, they installed a small playground for the smaller children. Also a bird sanctuary was sponsored by the nature study department of the Women's Department Club.<sup>16</sup>

Park Superintendent, Richard A. Wey, made this reflection: "Once regarded as luxuries, they now are considered necessities because nobody could do without them."<sup>17</sup> At this time the park system was administered by a bipartisan board of four members. The commissioners were appointed by the mayor. The department was a distinct bonding division from the civil city, and was protected by state law.<sup>18</sup>

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15. Terre Haute Star, June 27, 1937.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.



During the war, June 28--July 5, 1942 was declared "Terre Haute Park and Recreation Week." The purpose and general concept of parks is evidenced in the following excerpt taken from the June 28 issue of the Terre Haute Sunday Tribune and Star of 1942:

"To be patriotic, it is necessary that each one of us be most efficient every working moment. It is also necessary in order to keep at a top level of efficiency that we get plenty of outdoor exercise through activities that will furnish that utmost in pleasure and relaxation.

"Because many of us will be required to maintain a continuous effort throughout the summer and conserve all things, most of all rubber, the Terre Haute Park System will solve your recreation problem and add to your family's pleasure. Visit at least one city park during Park Week."

While the war made a great number of improvements impossible, there was still concern as to the upkeep of parks. Frank P. Elder, then park superintendent, stated that the "planting of trees in the parks is extremely important if the park's natural beauty is to be maintained."<sup>19</sup> Numerous trees, flowers and shrubs were planted during this period. Reports of vandalism also became more numerous.

The importance of supervised playgrounds is

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19. Terre Haute Tribune and Star, June 28, 1942.



again emphasized <sup>is</sup> an article about Thompson Park:

"Of much value in the park is the completely equipped playground area, enabling children in the surrounding neighborhoods to play in a place which is both safe and well supervised."<sup>20</sup>

The total park acreage in 1942 amounted to 658.94 acres, as oppsed to the 52.68 acres in 1909. And, Frank Elder declared that "more parks and recreation centers, addtional community houses and improved facilities" were the objectives of the city administration.<sup>21</sup>

The city did continue to acquire more parks and, in 1970, had a total acreage of 721.71, with several parks in the planning stages. However, by the early '60's, James Champlin, recreation consultant for the State Board of Health, reported "the local recreation program sub-standard as found in a state-wide survey."<sup>22</sup> and Public demands seemed to have been ignored as to the improvement of the park programs. Mrs. Alice Cannon, co-chairman of H. E. L. P. (Housewives' Effort for Local Progress), blamed the situation on the

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20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Terre Haute Star, May 18, 1961.



indifference of government officials:

"Public officials have been given ample time for consideration (of the park situation) ...without reaching any collective conclusion... Do not these conditions exist in part because our local government has stifled the desire of the citizen for local progress through disinterest and lack of co-operation? Should our government officials be allowed to ignore our plea for progress when recommendations for a good recreation program have been thought out by qualified experts?"<sup>23</sup>

On the 10th anniversary of H. E. L. P., in 1971, the Department of Public Parks issued a letter to the citizens of Terre Haute and surrounding area:

"The board of Park Commissioners, City of Terre Haute commends the HELP Organization as being a most vital force in making Terre Haute a better place in which to live.

"We also commend and welcome the special interest of HELP in our park system. We congratulate HELP on its 10th Anniversary and ask that the Officers, Board, and Membership continue in their quest for a better and more progressive city."<sup>24</sup>

Terre Haute held many planning sessions for recreation improvement. In 1965 Terre Haute was the host for a regional conference for central western Indiana. City and county officials as well as park professionals from many surrounding communities attended. The primary interest focused on how to

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23. Terre Haute Star, May 18, 1961.

24. Letter issued by the Dept. of Public Parks, February 4, 1971.



develop neighborhood parks and river banks.<sup>25</sup> It was during this period that a beautification program took place at Steeg Park.<sup>26</sup>

As in earlier decades, the importance of natural beauty was emphasized in the creation of Dobbs Memorial Grove which was "to be used as a natural forest for park purposes"<sup>27</sup> and as a "city arboretum."<sup>28</sup> The various groups who sponsored this action were: Izaak Walton League, Indiana Conservation Department, Kiwanis Club, Boys' Club and the Boy Scouts.

The late '60's and early '70's saw conflicting viewpoints and actions. Parks were under development, Markle's Mill, for example, while Jules Brittlebank's bequest for a public park raised the following opposition: "The consensus of opinion seems to be that the city of Terre Haute has enough playground park area. Acreage and per-capita-wise this is true. Our city has more park space per citizen than the national average."<sup>29</sup> The proposal was to use the money for the revitalization of the downtown shopping area and the building of a mall.

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25. Terre Haute Tribune, October 1, 1965.

26. Terre Haute Star, September 1, 1965.

27. Terre Haute Tribune, October 24, 1963.

28. Terre Haute Tribune and Star, June 8, 1969.

29. Terre Haute Tribune, December 17, 1970.



Mayor Leland Larrison discussed the possibility of closing Collett Park due to acts of vandalism. Such action would have to be taken since "insurance companies refuse to underwrite this type of loss."<sup>30</sup> Vandalism continues to add to the woes of the park department.

Whether the park system of Terre Haute will continue to progress remains to be seen. In the minds and eyes of many, from past and present decades, the parks not only add beauty but are also a necessity for healthful and pleasurable living.

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30. Terre Haute Star, December 8, 1970.